

The #1 Computer Game Magazine

Computer Gaming World

ZD

SEPTEMBER 1996

NO. 146

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F-22 Shootout!



F-22 LIGHTNING II



JETFIGHTER III



TFX 3



iF-22 LIGHTNING

Four Sims For The *Hottest Jet In The World*

► Setups & Strategies For

9 Top Multiplayer Games

PLUS- How To Build Your Own Game Net

Quake Maps
& Secrets!
page 142

**Have you cleared the
streets of Los Angeles yet?**

**Did you tip the exotic dancers
or did you blow a few away?**

WHAT?!

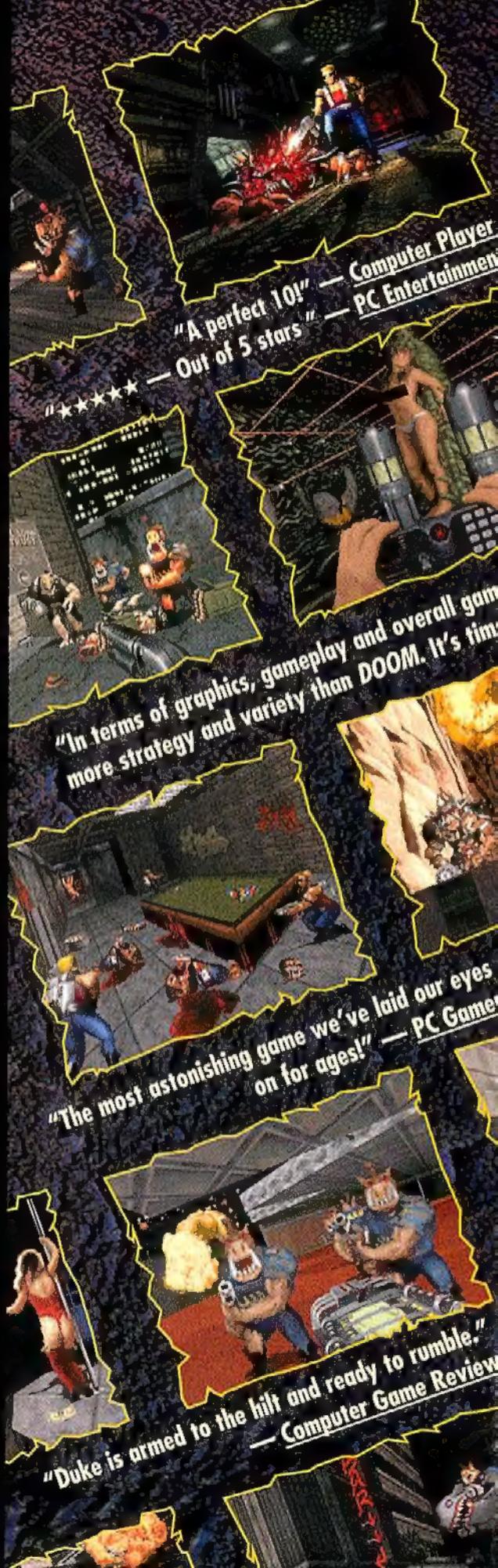
You haven't played it yet??

WHY IS DUKE NUKEM 3D THE BEST?

Even running in super crisp 800x600 SVGA it blasts along faster than every other comparable 3D PC title. It's not pure speed at the expense of versatility either - it is possible to look up, down, or sideways at any time, with the bitmapped scenery undergoing minimal deformation and no speed loss whatsoever. The engine also caters for full interaction, so bullets leave pock marks on walls, enemy's blood drips down crates and earthquakes cause

huge sections to shift altogether, thereby granting access to new locations. It all contributes to the feeling of being encased within a grim world as opposed to wandering through impregnable, static corridors. The effect is hugely rewarding and is surely the direction in which such games should be heading.

This potential has luckily been exploited too. So often games fail to capitalize on excellent technologies but each of Duke Nukem's levels are noticeably different, being packed with huge ramps, drops, lifts, jumps and cunningly hidden secret areas. None look the same (indeed there is often a significant variation within a single building) and there is always a feeling that there is a new trick round the next corner. — *Edge Magazine*



DUKE NUKEM™ 3D



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Mature Players: Violence and Adult themes

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Well, what are you waiting for?

"...design, Duke is better than DOOM. The modem/network play is far better and allows to make way for the Duke." — Computer Player

WINNER OF
"GAME OF SHOW"



"Duke Nukem 3D truly looks like a 3D supermodel of a game: sleek, sexy, and gory with lead-thrashing action." — Strategy Plus

"The BFG was a pop-gun, (it's) got nothing on the sophisticated hi-tech weaponry at Duke Nukem's disposal." — Computer Gaming World



ALSO SUPPORTS TEN

"DOOM is DEAD — long live Duke Nukem 3D, could this be the greatest PC shoot'em-up ever?" — X-GEN



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CHANCE.

"A solid multi-player game fest."

-Computer Gaming World

"Multi-player, city building, land exploring, alien busting fun"

-Strategy Plus

"Absorbing gameplay... the best visuals and sound effects that today's technology offers."

-Next Generation



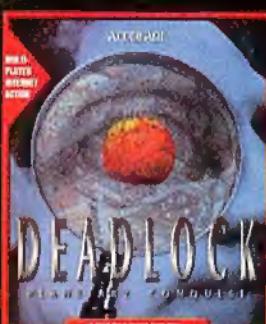
Interactive Enemy A.I. Your incredible 3D-rendered opponents possess unique attributes that will tilt the balance of power. Intimidation is key as they hurl insults and carry out strategies that can mean your doom.



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Computer Gaming

World

FEATURES

50 Cover Story: F-22 Shootout!

Take to the skies with CGW as we go on a reconnaissance mission to uncover the next generation of flight simulators.

No less than four companies will be releasing F-22 simulators in the next year. We've got the lowdown on all of them, and we'll tell you who's most likely to win this epic dogfight.



65 Network Gaming

Multiplayer network gaming is here, and it's way more fun than playing with yourself, so to speak. Here's our guide to the best multiplayer games around—how to set them up, and how to win.

- 66 Quake
- 68 Need For Speed SE
- 71 Duke Nukem 3D
- 74 MechWarrior 2
- 76 MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries
- 78 Advanced Tactical Fighters

- 81 Warcraft II
- 82 Command & Conquer
- 84 Sid Meier's CivNet

87 Build Your Own Game Net

Ready for network gaming at home—but don't know how to get started? Our comprehensive guide takes you step-by-step through the process of setting up your own gaming network over a LAN. You'll learn what to buy, what to avoid and how to put it all together.

SECTIONS

TECHNOLOGY

103 Loyd Case
Internet Gaming With Kali
111 Creative Labs' PCI 3D Blaster
by Dave Salvato
112 Paul Schuytema
Multiplayer Level Design In
3D Shooters

ADVENTURE/ROLE-PLAYING

121 Scorpia
Dinotopia
124 Scorpia's Tale
Mission Critical Hints



ACTION

130 D
by Mark Clarkson
133 Peter Olafson
Gore Galore In
Crusader: No Regret



136 Witchaven II
142 Quake DeathMatch
Strategies
by V. Long

CLASSICS/PUZZLES

159 Terry Coleman
Chessmaster 5000 is king
164 Treasure Quest
by Arion Demba
168 Escher Interactive
by Allen L. Greenberg

SPORTS

171 Dennis McCauley
Online Multiplayer NASCAR

173 ABC's Monday Night Football

by Terry Coleman



182 Tony La Russa
Baseball 3: 1996 Edition *by Jeff Green*

186 Bruce Jenner's
World Class Decathlon *by Gordon Boble*



SIMULATION

189 Denny Atkin
New Hardware On The Radar

192 Jane's AH-64D Longbow Strategies

by Robin G. Kim



STRATEGY/WARGAMES

197 Terry Coleman
Star General Blasts Off

205 Warcraft II Expansion
Set: Dark Portal
by Elliott Chin

206 Afterlife
by Tim Carter

212 American Civil War
by Terry Coleman

216 War College
by Patrick Miller



DEPARTMENTS

12 Just The FAQs
Answers to frequently asked questions

20 Johnny Wilson
Our revamped Top 100

26 Letters
Our readers speak out

32 Read.Me
Computer gaming news

40 Game Track
A look at what's cool and coming your way

232 Hall of Fame
Great games of all time

233 Patches
Game files to kill bugs dead

234 Top 100
Subscribers rate the top games

236 Martin Cirulis
What's the deal with gimmicks?

Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee present

D
R
A
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Understanding the
Octospider's language
is only part of an
enigmatic tale
of discovery and
suspense.

S I T E R R A



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A WORLD UNKNOWN.

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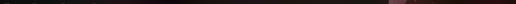
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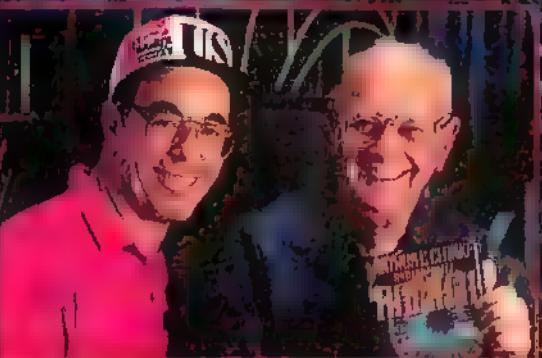

Curiosity is the key to unraveling the alien challenges set before you. Understanding is the key to survival.



Explore a vast world, teeming with organic and artificial life forms. Discover among them both friend and foe.



Inspect every facet of the three dimensional Rama world and the many objects found there.



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What's on the business end of my laser this month? What kind of a bent system do you rate games with? What do

you think you are, journalists? Why did you call one of your editors, "She Who Must Be Obeyed"?



What's On The CD?

Gather, friends and foes: *Computer Gaming World's CG-ROM* features head-to-head gameplay for those thirsting for the spontaneous and unpredictable challenge of live opponents. Accessing online gaming is easy. Just plug into a friendly game of poker with Kesmai's CASINO POKER, or, if seek-and-destroy is more to your liking, try Kesmai's HARPOON. Both games can be accessed through America Online, which is conveniently provided on this disc as well as on its own floppy disk. To earn your wings before taking flight in enemy territory, study Robin Kim's strategy for JANE'S LONGBOW AH-64D in this issue, and then refer to his exclusive fly-through on the CD to learn top flying aces' tricks. Also exclusive to the CGW reader, Charles Ardal provides a ZORK NEMESIS walkthrough in case you're in need of an alchemist's spell to free you from the Forbidden Lands of Frobozz.

There's something on this CG-ROM for everyone. The Shareware Awards are featured this month, complete with URLs for all the finalists and playable versions of the winners. Sample a preview of Activision's HYPERBLADE and play demos of AZRAEL'S TEAR from Mindscape, the



M1A2 Abrams tank simulator from Interactive Magic, TSR's ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: CORE RULES and many more.

How Do I Use It?

Our CD is a Windows program. If you have Windows 95, installation is simple: The CD is Autoplay enabled—just "lock 'n' load." Otherwise, from Windows 3.x, pop the CD into your drive, select Run from the Program Manager menu, and type "D:\RUN-ME" (where D is the letter of your CD ROM drive) to run it straight from the CD. Then type "D:\INSTALL" to create a CGW program group on your Windows desktop. If you have installed previous versions of the CG-ROM, this disc will use the program group already on your desktop. Point and click to navigate around the CD,

just as you would in any other Windows program. You can access any of the regular items (such as product demos or patches) simply by clicking on the corresponding button.

How Do I Play The Demos?

To view the demos, first click on EDITORS' HOT

PICKS or PRODUCT DEMOS. Next, click on your favorite genre: Action, Adventure, Classic, Strategy, or Wargames. Then click on your title of interest. Each demo has its own instructions for installation.

How Do I Get The Patch Files?

Click on Patches under the CGW Features, and then read the text window, which has instructions on copying the files to your hard drive. You can also access the patches from your DOS prompt by typing "D:\PATCHES" (where D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive) and copying them directly from there to your hard drive. We strongly recommend that you back up any previously saved games before installing a patch, as this may overwrite your existing program.

How Do I Get The CG-ROM?

Newsstand issues come in two varieties: with and without the CD. Each type is clearly marked. If you can't find the version you want in the store you frequent, encourage your retailer to carry it (or subscribe to ensure that you get a CD every month). To subscribe, simply call 303-665-8930, and specify that you want the CD-ROM version.



"Spin, fire, dive, die! Nothing beats WingMan Warbird's 360 degrees of pure killing power."

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How Do We Classify Games?

Action/Arcade (AC): The emphasis is on hand-eye coordination and reflexes, usually emphasizing fast play over story or strategy.

Adventure (AD): Games wherein you control an alter ego and move through a storyline or sequence of events, where puzzle-solving takes precedence over conversation and combat.

Classics/Puzzles (CP):

Classics are old stand bys and parlor games that appeal to many different types of gamers. Examples include: backgammon, bridge, chess, Monopoly, parchesi, Risk, and SOLitaire. Puzzle games are computer games which emphasize spatial relationships, word games and/or problem-solving without requiring gamers to follow a storyline. Examples would be: SHANGAI, TETRIS and ZIG-ZAG.

Role-Playing (RP): RPGs are a subset of adventure games, but stress character development, often through improving stats or other attributes. Conversations with non-player characters (NPCs) and tacit-

cal combat are generally more important than in Adventure games. Finally, the game world tends to be large, and the plot less linear, often with some quests/treks outside the main storyline.

Simulations (SI): Highly realistic games from a first-person perspective; you may drive a realistically simulated race car, fly a military aircraft with a meticulous physics model, or swoop through a detailed sci-fi environment.

Usually polygon-filled technology is used to build the simulated world on the fly.

Sports (SP): The sports game category is a broad genre which includes action (NBA Live) and strategy games (FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO) based on sports.

Strategy (ST): Problem-solving, short- and long range planning are the keys here. These games almost always emphasize resource and risk management. This genre includes conflict-based sci-fi and fantasy games (X-COM, OUTPOST, MOO), as well as "pure" strategy games and "software toys" such as SimCity.

Wargames (WG): A subset of

strategy games, these recreate historical conflicts from a command perspective. They may be tactical, operational, or strategic, and stress anything from logistics and firepower to morale and leadership. They may be simple (PANZER GENERAL, EMPIRE II) to incredibly detailed and complex (PACIFIC WAR).

What Is Your Reviews Policy?

1) We only review from the final copy of the game. Though it has become popular among PC gaming magazines to review from late beta copies, we feel that the reader is best served by having the reviewer look at the same copy of a game that the readers will find on the shelves. While we recognize that this causes some delay in coverage, we believe the reader is better served by such caution.

2) We expect our reviewers to finish the game. We want our readers to be assured that we do not review based on immediate or early impressions of a game. Our reviewers give a game ample opportunity to show its quality. In some cases, bugs make it impossible to finish a game, but we identify situations where that has occurred.

3) We make every effort to match the reviewer to the game. We take into consideration the preferences, background and possible biases of the reviewer and, where possible, we find people with actual life experience or special backgrounds that match a game. We believe this policy enhances both the credibility of the review and the enjoyment of gameplay when the real world and the game world are competently compared.

4) We do not accept free travel from software or hardware companies. We believe such gifts have a tacit assumption of coverage attached to them. We will only cover such events/launches as we believe will benefit our readers.

HOW DO WE RATE?



Outstanding: The rare game that gets it all right. The graphics, sound, and gameplay come together to form a Transcendent Gaming Experience. Our strongest buying recommendation.



Very Good: A high-quality game that succeeds in many areas. May have minor problems, but is still worth your money, especially if you're interested in the subject matter or genre.



Average: A mixed bag. Can be a game that reaches for the stars, but fails short in several ways. Can also be a game that does what it does well, but lacks flair or originality.



Weak: A game with serious problems. Usually buggy, seriously lacking in play value, or just a poorly-conceived game design—you should think long and hard before buying it.



Abysmal: The rare game that gets it all wrong. This is reserved for those products so buggy, ill-conceived or valueless that you wonder why they were ever released in the first place.

A COMMENDABLE EFFORT.

But we offer a more creative way to kill your co-workers.



Variety of ways to die. In addition to all the other ways available, WIRED MAGAZINE says you can enjoy 27 cooperative levels of MARATHON plus 10 solo levels. With all the options available, you'll never be bored again. With The Ball and King Of The Hill, WIRED MAGAZINE says: "MARATHON is a real injected nightmare." When you find yourself sitting in a puddle of your own bodily fluids unable to speak, you'll probably agree. **MARATHON 2: DURANDAL. HOW WILL IT RUIN YOUR LIFE?**

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"Stellar!"

— *Next Generation*, March 1996



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The Top 100 Gets An Upgrade

The Best Game Ranking System Gets Better

We've always known that the Top 100 Poll and the Playing Lately lists were

important to you. That's what you tell us in letters and surveys and that's what people in the computer game industry tell us. It's often the first page in a new issue that they will check out. It's also been relatively unique. Many magazines (including ours) provide ratings where the editorial staff makes qualitative judgments of the relative values of games and many provide lists of bestsellers, but our Top 100 is a list of the cumulative, qualitative judgments of hundreds of readers—the best gamers in the world.

Combined with Playing Lately, a list of what our readers are actually playing during the month surveyed, CGW offers two different ways to glean game recommendations from our readership. Playing Lately indicates what games are hot, right now. The Top 100 gives a value judgment that reflects a game's value over the course of months and years. Playing Lately offers the most timely recommendations we

can provide from our readers, and the Top 100 tells which games are passing the test of time.

Realizing that gamers often use these lists to make buying decisions, and that many publishers have factored in our Top 100 list when deciding whether to publish certain games, we have always wanted these lists to be the best they could possibly be. In 1989, for example, we changed the system. We noticed that more and more games didn't fit into our two-genre classification system. At that time, we classified games as either Action/Adventure or Strategy/Wargames. Where do you put simulation games in that system? Not only was the classification system weak, but there was so much historical weight in the top scores that newly rated games couldn't budge them—even if they were blockbusters.

Worst of all, we thought, was the fact that we published numbers that seemed to promise more exactitude than they actually provided. For example, what was the difference between CARRIER FORCE (7.04), DECISION IN THE DESERT (7.03), EUROPE ABLAZE (7.01) and SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD (7.00)? When

“To obtain more reliable game rankings, we're mailing nearly 2,000 questionnaires each month to our subscribers.”

CARRIER FORCE was rated by 108 gamers and DECISION IN THE DESERT by 35, it could be a considerable difference.

We had an expert in statistics look at our process, and he advised us to move to a letter grade system to get the data to fall into natural groupings. He suggested that people understood better what an A meant in a system that ranged from F to A+ than they did

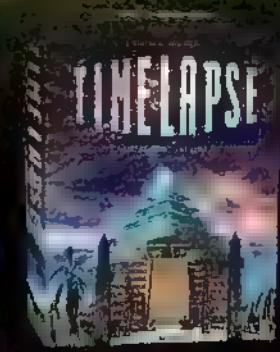
the meaning of 11 in a 12-point system. He told us that as long as we were accumulating data in order to get historical weight and trends in the ratings, we would have to move the highest rated games into the Hall of Fame and purge the rest after two years to make room for new titles.

We were also painfully aware of another problem affecting both the pre-1989 and post-1989 systems—self-selecting respondents. Until this month, all you had to do to rate a game was fill out the prepaid postcard bound into the magazine each month. This allowed three major forms of contamination into the data:

1. The same people could rate the same game multiple times over several months—raising the number of responses, but giving greater weight to the individuals who responded every month.

2. The most vocal and fanatic minorities were the most likely to rate games every month—and as a result could force higher ratings for games that had limited appeal outside their niche. Many a CEO's head has been shaken at the high





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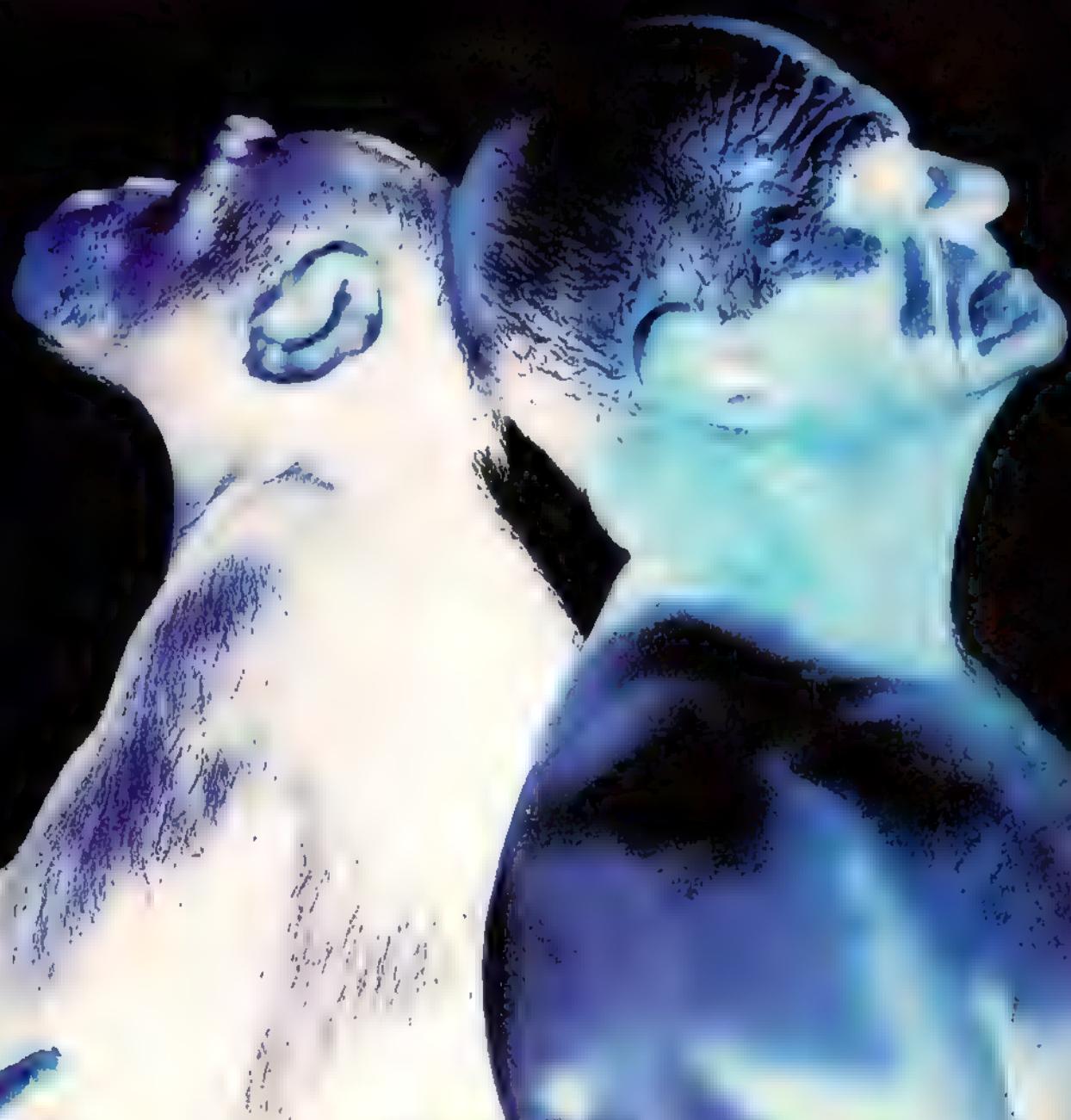
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RP

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rating of a wargame that may have only sold 5,000 copies but scored in our Top 10, or at the score of an Amiga game that may not even have been sold in our country.

3. Software companies could respond en masse and stack the deck. (It may be wrong to mention Accolade, Epyx and MicroProse as companies who attempted to cheat, but we're in one of those "tell-all" moods.) Fortunately, we did regular postmark checks in response to this problem, and we caught a lot of those attempts, but surely not all.

“
**Accolade,
Epyx and
MicroProse all
tried to stack
the Top 100 in
their favor at
one time or
another.”** **”**

Since that time, we have been reluctant to change the system, because we were afraid of skewing the results in one direction or another. For example, we knew that we could save a lot of money in terms of calculating the poll if we used our polling capability on Prodigy, then the World Wide Web, and then AOL to calculate our data. Unfortunately, we quickly realized that this would skew the data toward gamers who had modems and subscribed to a given online service. Though we do online polling for the benefit of our online

readers, we have continued to use the more expensive approach to create the list in the magazine.

Now, however, we have changed the system again. Too many people didn't understand how we went from their letter grade ratings to a numerical presentation in the Top 100 list. So, we've gone to a straight 10-point system (think of it as your version of our 5-star system, including the half stars), and we've done something about the self-selection problem! We now mail almost 2,000 questionnaires per month to our subscribers. These are random, nth name mailings. This means that we are getting valid responses from different subscribers each month, and we believe this system will take care of the contamination described above. It also gives extra value to our more than 100,000 subscribers. Now you must be a subscriber to be eligible to rate the games. Playing Lately is handled on the same questionnaire.

The only potential downside is that when you shift methodologies and are working with cumulative data like this, the initial data may be fairly volatile. The early results bore that out, with a number of titles that rated surprisingly high for one reason or another. However, the benefit of cumulative responses is that you should see predictable track records as time goes on. We'll watch with interest, and we hope you will do so as well.

You're still getting valuable recommendations from the best gamers in the country—there's just less noise in the translation now. It's yet another example of how we're trying to serve our readers better. We hope you'll agree that this makes one of CGW's classic features even more valuable. **€**

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

ARSENAL MOUNTS A TACTICAL DEFENSE

I have been invited to comment on the review of TACOPS (Windows) in the August issue of *Computer Gaming World* (page 186). I do not agree with the article's statements that TACOPS is a "dud" and a "mediocre simulation." Other than that, I consider the review to be technically accurate except for two minor errors in interpretation and some exaggeration.

It was an error for the article to state that vehicles in TACOPS fire antitank guided missiles (ATGM) with great accuracy while moving at full speed. Movement and combat in TACOPS is abstracted into pulses that represent 15 seconds of scale activity. If an ATGM can reach its target in less than 15 seconds, the game engine reduces the forward movement potential of the firer to reflect the time lost to its conceptually executing a short halt before firing. If an ATGM will require more than 15 seconds to reach its target, the game engine holds the firer in place until the ATGM impacts.

It was an error for the article to state that the time required to reload ATGM launchers is not taken into account. In TACOPS, single-shot ATGM launchers have a reload time that varies from 30 and 75 seconds. Plus there is sometimes another 15 to 30 seconds of delay attributable to target acquisition costs. The ATGM launcher on the Bradley, on the M981 ITV, and on the LAV25AT holds two missiles. The second missile can be fired as soon as the first hits, but once the second round is fired there will be a reloading delay of at least 75 seconds.

It was an exaggeration to say that TACOPS makes no attempt to model morale or command, control and communications (C3). TACOPS does not model varying levels of these factors, but it does model a situation of optimum training, morale, and C3. It was also

an exaggeration to say that type of ammunition and point of impact for artillery fire can be changed seconds before a barrage arrives. The apparent ability to do this in TACOPS is an abstraction that is explained on page 106 of the *User's Guide*. In short, the TACOPS artillery implementation is effect oriented rather than procedure oriented.

Abstractions in TACOPS, like those mentioned above, and its less than state-of-the-art sounds and graphics were not oversights in design. These things were done intentionally so that the game would perform well under the Windows 3.1x operating system on computers dating back to the 386.

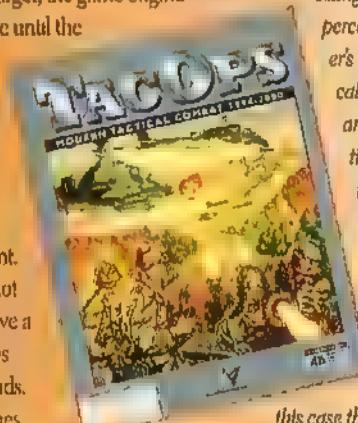
*I. L. Holdridge
Developer of TACOPS*

Thanks for the clarification. It's always interesting to look at the player's/reviewer's perception in relation to the designer's intent and model. Since most calculations in a computer game are handled invisibly, we sometimes think certain factors are ignored or overabstracted.

Thanks for the assurances on your design.

As for the "dud" issue, we plead guilty. We try to write headline copy that will draw readers into an article, but in

this case the deck misinformed. In terms of design and gameplay, TACOPS is certainly not a dud. Graphically, it is considerably behind the times, for precisely the reasons you just discussed. Some readers have pointed out that we gave the Macintosh version of TACOPS a higher score than the Windows version. That's because, after the delay, we were expecting more, so the PC version rated lower. For either version, however, the term "dud" was, at best, an overstatement. Patrick Miller should not be blamed for wordplay injected into the article by the editorial staff. We often rewrite the headlines for the articles and, this time, we hurt the article instead of strengthening it.



WIN95 AND THE NETWORK GAMER

Am I the only person who thinks Windows 95 is the most counter-intuitive, biggest, pickiest, horrible excuse for an operating system ever invented? I'm beginning to suspect a plot of silence that is keeping people from talking about the utterly unworkable Win95, and am wondering if dissenters are being quietly disappeared by Microsoft goons in dark sunglasses and black trenchcoats.

Let me say that the only reason I am faced with the nightmare of using Win95 is because I am addicted to PC games and everyone is saying that this is the future of PC gaming (please, dear God, let them be wrong). I am so addicted to PC games that I have, in my home, four Pentium 166 decked out ultimate gaming machines simply for playing multiplayer games. I don't use them for business, word processing, spreadsheeting, calculating or keeping my budget.

Games, games, games. I keep my systems up-to-date and spend way too much money on games each month. I buy almost exclusively network-multiplayer games as I can find few games worth playing on my own. I know I have a problem and that's half the battle, right?

I have owned PCs for the last eight years and have had to deal with all the frustrations [of] getting games to work with DOS. I have been working in the computer graphics industry for three years now and am a senior animator on the CGI television series *Reboot*. I work everyday with Unix, Mac and PC operating systems. I have had to get all sorts of games to network properly on my home system. All this adds up to a fairly computer-literate person who is probably above-average in the amount of computer experience most people have had in their lives. AND I CAN'T GET A SINGLE

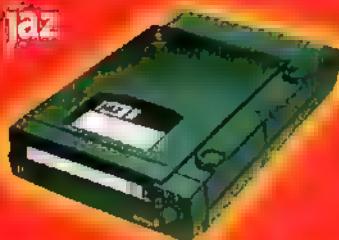
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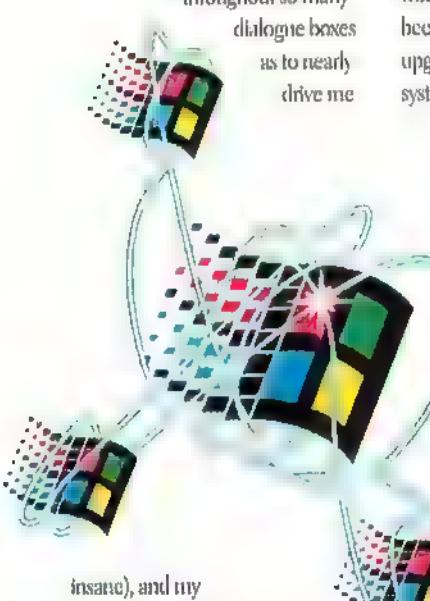


BECAUSE IT'S YOUR STUFF.

BLOODY THING ABOUT WIN95 TO WORK PROPERLY!!!!

I just want to play games. Network games. I can't even get Win95 to install on one of my computers (it installed fine on two of them and all four are exactly the same). I can't get a Microsoft game (*CLOSE COMBAT*) to network with the TCP/IP protocol it demands (or anything else). I spent six hours this last weekend trying to figure out TCP/IP settings and addresses (options for which are spread

throughout so many dialogue boxes as to nearly drive me



insane), and my computers still can't see each other. The only game I've been able to network briefly through Satan's operating system has been *WARCRAFT II*, which runs slower than under DOS and without many of the sound effects. The volume of Win95 is always cranked (or off) regardless of whether I try to change it through the sound control panel or in the game. I am using Soundblaster 16s, the most compatible soundcards there are. And now one of my Win95 computers refuses to run *WARCRAFT II* at all due to soundcard conflicts (even though I ran it successfully before).

I made the mistake of trying to

switch my modeming over to Win95. Doesn't work worth a damn. I got detailed instructions (which are about eight times as long and complicated as setup instructions for Win 3.11) and installation disks from my Internet provider and followed them carefully. It still doesn't work, even slightly.

My hardware dealer is a well-respected supplier of Comtex computers, one of the best PC sellers in Canada. He specializes in network systems. He and I are still trying to work out my problems (we have been for the last nine months when I upgraded from 486s). This operating system is supposed to be the easiest,

most intuitive point-and-click interface ever created and mass-marketed

by an evil, bloated software corporation. I don't understand how anyone (let alone the average, barely computer literate family) can get anything at all out of Win95. I am baffled. Utterly.

I am scared when I hear of all the hype about Win95 being the future of gaming when from my painful experience so far it has failed miserably on all counts.

Zeke Norton

zeke@reboot.com

Senior Animator, BLT Productions
Vancouver BC, CANADA

Zeke, we feel your pain. We know you're not alone in experiencing these frustrations, but our faith in Win95 has always been a little like our faith in democracy—it's the best of all the flawed systems.

This month we've prepared a spe-

cial feature on how to set up a multiplayer gaming network and get nine of the best games running on it. It probably won't solve all your problems, but we hope it will help make things easier.



think the Haflner games offer the best value in strategy-based gaming today. You can play the games very quickly and you don't need a lot of horsepower. It's almost refreshing in a way.

Anyhow, thanks again for the coverage. It's good to know I'm not the only out there, and hopefully this will help spur more coverage of this type of product.

Rick Rosinski
Freeland, MI

Some of the most eerily accurate season replays we've ever experienced were played using the Lance Haflner games. We've been playing them since the Apple II days and love them. As for the error on COURTSIDE COLLEGE BASKETBALL, I guess we're still confused from when Lance had to change the title from FINAL FOUR COLLEGE BASKETBALL.

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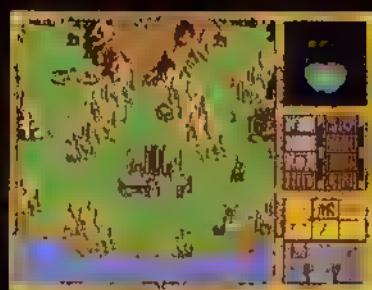
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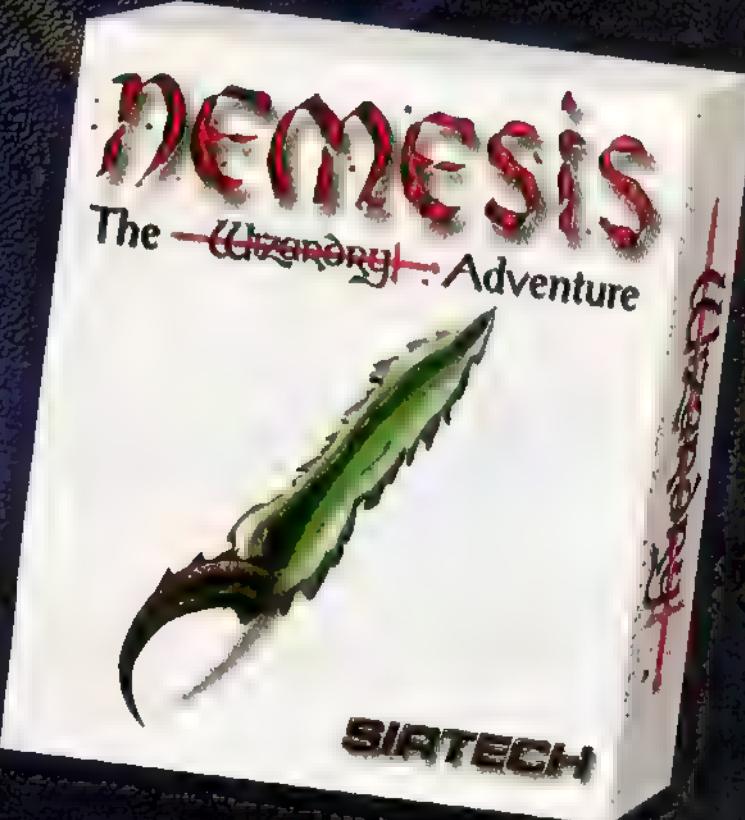
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Whatever Happened To ...

Some Vaporware Condenses While Other Games Dissipate

A few products that may have long ago been consigned to the "Vapor Forever" category are currently showing signs that they are "not quite dead, yet." Long-anticipated games that seem genuinely close to release as of press time are:

BATTLECRUISER 3000 A.D.

HARVESTER AND THE ELDER

SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL.

Take 2's strategy for **BATTLECRUISER 3000 A.D.** was to move lone-wolf designer Derek Smart—whose well-known problems with Three-Sixty Pacific (money troubles), IntraCorp (contract differences), Mission Studios (legal difficulties) and Take 2 (contractual disagreements) have been well-discussed on-line—to Latrobe, PA, where the rest of Take 2's developers (known for **STAR CRUSADER** and **RIPPER**) are located. Take 2 is currently improving the art (see screenshot) and interface (see our AOL or Web story) while Smart focuses on the game programming itself. It certainly looks as though the game will ship in October (1996, not 3000).

At press time, we have received a "near-gold" version of Bethesda Softwork's **THE ELDER SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL**. Currently, the terrain model has been significantly enhanced by



BATTLECRUISER 3000 A.D.

algorithms built by fractal genius and pioneer, Dr. Ken Musgrave. This addition guarantees a better look for the game than originally planned, but the true beauty in this game is below the surface. **DAGGERFALL** offers role-playing detail far beyond games of recent vintage.

Another vintage vapor program is Merit Software's **HARVESTER**. **HARVESTER** was a

perennial demo at computer industry trade shows and anticipated as one of the most controversial adventure games ever (due to the prodigious blood and gore factor). Delays in **HARVESTER** can be attributed to both the perfectionism of the designer and the cash flow difficulties of the publisher. Now, Merit anticipates that **HARVESTER** will be in stores around late

October, and our beta version looks like the game is in just about the right condition to make that ship date.

Ironically, at the same time that these classic vapor titles are nearing publication, some nearly complete titles have been pulled back (even though they were allegedly "reviewed" in another game magazine). Mindscape is attempting to make a clear commitment to quality by cancelling SSI's **RENEGADE 2** and their own **WARHAMMER 40,000 AD: DARK CRUSADERS**. In both cases, company officials candidly admitted that the products weren't what they wanted them to be. They suggested that cancelling the products was less expensive in the long run than trying to

ON THE SHELF

Here are some of the hottest products on the market, as well as

BACK TO BAGHDAD

BACK TO BAGHDAD is the most realistic jet fighter simulation yet. It packs a top-notch flight model, ter-



the ones that frankly ain't so hot. Reviews for most are coming soon.

rain graphics but from real satellite imagery of Iraq, and intimidatingly realistic radar and weapons systems. Unfortunately, you'll be ill-prepared for this realism unless you're a former F-16 pilot, as the game's manual is dreadfully incomplete. If you're willing to head to the Web for tutorial information, or wait for MSI's add-on manual, this is as close as you can get to the cockpit of a real F-16. There are nagging omissions, such as the lack of wingmen on most flights, but you'll be so busy flying the plane you won't have time to be annoyed. Despite an instant-



HARVESTER

rebuild a reputation for quality after putting out inferior products.

In addition, Blizzard Entertainment has pulled the plug on PAX IMPERIA 2, the long-awaited game of interplanetary conquest. According to Blizzard, this had nothing to do with the upcoming release of STARCRAFT since the two games are totally distinctive in style and substance.

We have also received word

from Interplay Productions that the rumored computer version of Axis & Allies is off. Early understandings with the Milton Bradley division

of Hasbro apparently broke down when new personnel at the boardgame company entered the picture. Apparently, Hasbro intends to publish a computer version themselves similar to the CD-i version which was published a few years ago.

Finally, this just in from Spain Generalissimo Francisco Franco and Champions: The Computer Role-Playing Game are both still dead.



PAX IMPERIA 2

action mode, this one's hot for hard core sim flyers, but on the cold side for the USNF "take off and start shooting" crowd. -D. Atkin

PC CD-ROM

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Reader Service #301

CLOSE COMBAT

It's June 1944. The Americans are attempting to break out of the Normandy beachhead, and the Germans are


making them pay in blood for every inch of ground they take. In Close

COMBAT, a real-time Windows 95 game designed by Atomic and published by Microsoft, you command either the Americans or the Germans, playing each of the 39 scenarios separately or as part of a campaign. These are small, highly tactical battles in which you maneuver squad sections and individual vehicles in areas that typically cover several hundred yards. The interface definitely takes some getting used to, map scrolling is slow and jerky, the zoomed-in view is so blocky that it's nearly useless, and giving orders in real time can be an exercise in frustration. Still, if you like real time play and can overlook CLOSE COMBAT's deficiencies, few games succeed as well in portraying combat up close and personal. -P. Miller

Windows 95 CD-ROM

Microsoft, (800) 426-9400
Reader Service #302

This month DUKE NUKEM 3D kicks CIVILIZATION II down to third place, while WARCRFT II holds the number two position for the third consecutive month. HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC climbs higher up the chart, while DOOM II and NASCAR RACING both reappear after a long absence.

You'll no longer find the CGW Poll Card

bound into the magazine, but check your mail box. We mail a survey to 1,500 randomly chosen subscribers each month, and we use the results to calculate the Top 100 And Playing Lately each month.

READERS' TOP 10

		Last Month	Months On Chart
1.	Duke Nukem 3D (3D Realms)	3	5
2.	Warcraft II (Blizzard)	2	7
3.	Civilization II (MicroProse)	1	4
4.	Heroes of Might and Magic (New World Computing)	9	9
5.	MechWarrior 2 (Activision)	-	9
6.	Steel Panthers (SSI)	4	9
7.	Command and Conquer (Virgin/Westwood)	6	10
8.	Doom II (id)	-	8
9.	NASCAR Racing (Papyrus / Virgin)	-	5
10.	Panzer General (SSI)	10	18

FRONT PAGE SPORTS! BASEBALL PRO '96

FRONT PAGE SPORTS: BASEBALL Pro is back—but is it better?

Many of the modifications in the '96 edition are not to the game but to its environment. Revamped for Windows 95, FPS BASEBALL PRO now consists of a number of small windows that can be turned on and



Dungeons & Dragons Tug-of-War

Who Has What With Regard to AD&D Titles

Since the glory days of the old SSI gold box AD&D RPGs, gamers have been eagerly awaiting the next batch of good

Dungeons & Dragons role-playing games. The question of late, though, has been who will make these games. Will it be SSI? Interplay? Take 2? It

depends on who has the license, and if you ask TSR, they'll say three companies do actually. That's because TSR's AD&D line has over a dozen different campaign worlds, and each world is its own license. (In addition, check out this month's CG-ROM for a demonstration of the AD&D Core Rules product.)

SSI still has the *Dark Sun* and generic AD&D license, but has decided to take a hiatus from RPGs. DEATHKEEP was their last AD&D game, and DARK SUN ONLINE, available exclusively on TEN, will be their only RPG for the foreseeable future.

Interplay bought the *Forgotten Realms* and *Planescape* licenses. *Forgotten Realms* is the most popular AD&D world, and Interplay's first two titles will be set in this universe, though neither will be an



RPG. The first, BLOOD & MAGIC, is a real-time strategy game (see last month's Hands On section), while UNDERMOUNTAIN will be a 3D action game using the

DESCENT engine (see Inside Action in this month's Action column for details). They are working on two RPGs, one set in the *Forgotten Realms* and the other set in *Planescape*, set for release in

late 1997.

Lastly, Take 2 has bought the *Ravenloft* license, and their first game will be a 3D fighting game pitting your player character in one-on-one combat in various arenas against Baron von Strahd and other undead creatures. Called IRON & BLOOD, it should be available in the coming months for the Playstation and PC.

The potential could be there for even more games from more developers, as TSR still has many other AD&D worlds which haven't been licensed as of yet. Other notable campaign worlds still to be snatched up include the popular Dragonlance campaign, the new Birthright campaign, the Mystaria campaign, the Spelljammer world and the Council of Wyrms setting.—Elliott Chin

From G Ratings to X, GT Interactive Spans the Gaming Market

Close on the heels of GT Interactive's acquisition of FormGen, publishers of the popular and controversial game, DUKE NUKEM 3D by 3D Realms, GT has moved into the children's market, too. In two separate acquisitions in as many weeks, GT purchased Humongous Entertainment, publishers of the best-selling FREDDY FISH and PUTT PUTT children's games, and FormGen. At the time this issue went to press, there were no plans to liquidate, consolidate or change the operations of either of the two acquired firms. Although a spokesman for GT was unable to reveal the dollar value of the FormGen purchase, he did say the purchase of Humongous was valued at approximately \$76 million. These two purchases follow an earlier GT purchase of WizardWorks, makers of the "Zone" add-on products, HIZONE for HEXEN AND HERETIC, and FIZONE for FURY 3. The acquisitions, in conjunction with GT's exclusive distribution agreement with Walmart stores representing over 150 software publishers, depicts GT's goal of targeting all areas of the gaming market.

Acclaim Adjusts PC Game Strategy

As part of Acclaim's relatively new emphasis on PC Games, the successful cartridge maker has had to come to grips with the differences between the videogame and computer game markets. As a result, the Long Island-based company has focused on finding unique affiliated labels to distribute as it re-engineers its in-house development strategy. Currently, the company has distribution and hybrid (development/publishing) deals with Pulse Entertainment (BAD MOJO) and Take 2 Software (RIPPER and the upcoming BLOOD & IRON (set in the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons world of Ravenloft)). In addition, their long-term developer, Sculptured Software is hard at work on a 1Q97 title called STRATOSPHERE. STRATOSPHERE is a networkable real-time strategy game and features some intriguing interplay with flying land masses.

off and moved around for a customized setup. The main gameplay window contains the conventional catcher's perspective, but after the ball is hit the game switches to 3D mode, and uses similar graphics as the previous version. Graphical performance, even in Windows 95 and a speedy system, is its weakest position. The AI has a few potentially game-bowing errors as well, such as some really dumb base-running decisions. Aspiring Lasordas and Weavers, however, should appreciate the multitude of player statistics and managerial options. The ball games themselves tend to be statistically realistic, and the superb ball physics add to this feel. —T. Kaialas

PC CD-ROM

Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707

Reader Service #303



CYBERJUDAS

Essentially a new edition of an intriguing geopolitical simulation called SHADOW PRESIDENT, CYBERJUDAS offers three approaches to simulating the role of U.S. President. You can opt to simply lead the country as you did in SHADOW PRESIDENT, a detailed exercise that integrated the CIA World Factbook into a game of global diplomacy, economic

management, international espionage and military intervention. You can also play the CYBERJUDAS Gambit, the same game with the added intrigue of having a traitor for one of your cabinet members. You try to find out where the traitor is going to intervene next so you can interdict him or her and clear yourself. Another option is the Cabinet Wars scenario, in which you have to balance an administration full of cabinet members jockeying for influence.

Where SHADOW PRESIDENT had pacing problems, CYBERJUDAS has a real sense of urgency about it, with an ever accelerating pace. The graphics are more intriguing than the bland, digitized images of its predecessor; the sound track is appropriately eerie; and the heavy statistical model underneath the game is more covert, placing the emphasis on entertainment rather than number-juggling. CYBERJUDAS



nd on the 8th day,
He split to Maui.





A vibrant, abstract painting featuring a person's profile in profile on the left, rendered in dark red and brown tones. The background is a dynamic mix of blue, yellow, and purple washes, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the upper right, a person in a patterned shirt and jeans stands with arms raised, looking towards the horizon. A small, stylized tree is visible on the left side. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

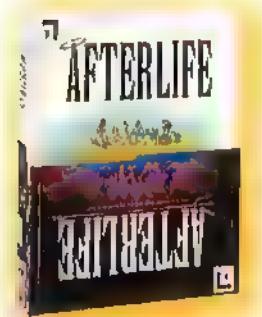
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to feed the fish.





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3D REALMS COMES TO "GET SOME" AS SHAREWARE AWARDS PRESENTED



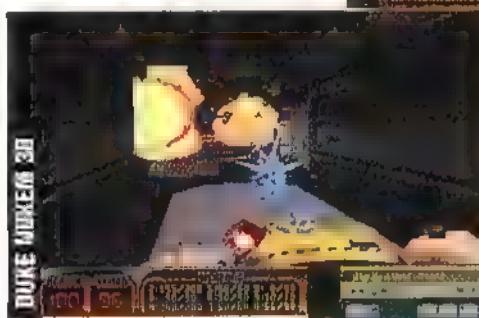
Onoring the outstanding shareware in the industry, Computer Gaming World and PC Magazine co-hosted the Ziff-Davis Shareware Awards at the Shareware Industry Conference in Scottsdale, AZ this past June.

Selected by the editors of CGW from a list of the most popular downloads of 1995-96, the most outstanding shareware game titles for the year ending March 31, 1996 were:

Action, DUKE NUKEM 3D by 3D Realms; Card & Casino game,

REAL DEAL from MVP Software (MVP won for their third consecutive year in

this category for the outstanding AI and personality in this collection featuring Whist, Black Jack, 31 and more); Puzzle & Logic game, RINGS OF THE MAGI from MVP Software (a classic puzzle game enwrapped in a mythical storyline), and Arcade, C y V's KRYPTON EGG 95 (an addictive, high-resolution arcade game, complete with magical sprites). The real scene stealer, however, was DUKE NUKEM 3D level designer Richard Gray as he made a return appearance to



DUKE NUKEM 3D



RINGS OF THE MAGI



REAL DEAL

collect the award for the Best Overall shareware game. DUKE NUKEM was selected for its refreshing spoof of the film industry, its gruesome graphics and its sound bytes with attitude; it's a fast-action, splatter game

that's entertaining as well as humorous. All shareware game winners are on this month's CD, or available for download from the ZD Net software library at <http://www.zdnet/zdi/shareware>

The Shareware application winners, selected by the editors of PC Magazine were: Business & Finance: SMARTDRAW 95 by SmartDraw Software, Inc., Applications: My PERSONAL DIARY FOR WINDOWS 95, by CAM Development; Internet Program and Best

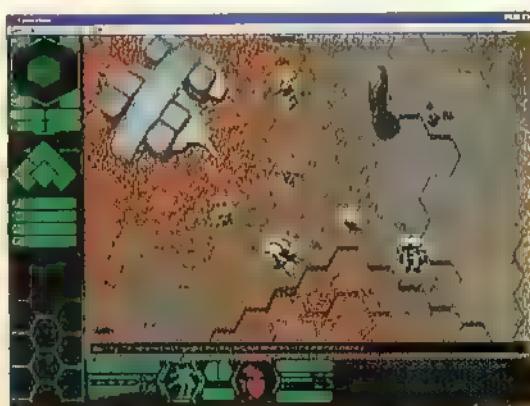
Program of the Year: FREEAGENT, by Forte Technologies; Networking: X-FORUM 3 NETWORK MESSAGE FORUM, by Extensions Software Corp.; Programming Tools: WinEdit, by Wilson WindowWare; Utilities: WINZIP FOR WINDOWS 95/NT, by Nico Mak Computing.

offers a fascinating "what-if?" for would-be world leaders that is both replayable and satisfying.—J. Wilson

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Reader Service #304

MISSION FORCE: CYBERSTORM

Sierra's new robot combat title, MISSION FORCE: CYBERSTORM is proof that good turn based strategy games aren't dead. This is actually the third product in Sierra's EARTHSIGT line, but this slick title is a sci-fi strategy game, not a space combat sim. In this futuristic setting, the galaxy has been overrun by technological constructs, the Cybrids. Mankind too frail to combat these mechanical monsters, has created mecha-



destroying enemy installations and conducting reconnaissance runs. After choosing a mission, you travel planet-side, where combat is played out on a beautiful hex-map over several different climates and terrain. Destroy enough Cybrid bases and you'll receive credits, promotions and new technologies, as well as bigger, badder Hercs. Suffer too many defeats, and your commanders will terminate you

before the Cybrids do. Sci-fi generals can at last breathe a sigh of relief; we've got a good combat strategy title on our hands. E. Chin

Windows 95 CD-ROM
Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707
Reader Service #305

nized defenders of its own: cybernetic troops, the Bioderms, which pilot gargantuan robots called Hercs. Armchair commanders are able to select from a variety of Hercs and missions throughout several solar systems: defending bases, mining precious ore for the war effort,

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SIGHTINGS

Here's an early look at the space invaders that will be vying for room on your hard drive. Some of these games are still months

away, and they aren't even playable yet, but at least you can see what they look like, and get an idea what their intentions are.

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, the next space sim from LucasArts, sounds simply outstanding. LucasArts has finally jumped into the world of multiplayer gaming, and this first foray won't disappoint all you space jockeys out there. Unlike its predecessors, there is no "plot" or campaign structure, but it is filled with a string of nonlinear missions. The design team is discussing the possibility of the Battle Of Endor as being the backdrop to these missions. The game has some single-player missions, but those will mostly be used as trainers for the real pur-



pose of this game, multiplayer Star Wars. The confirmed ships for each side are the Rebel alphabet soup (X-, Y-, B- and A-Wings) plus the Z-95 Headhunters. And those with Imperial tastes will fly the four TIE models—Fighter, Interceptor, Bomber, and Advanced—as well as the Assault Gunboat. The other ships have yet to be decided, but there will be no TIE Defender or Missile Boal, as gameplay will be too unbalanced. In addition to the multiplayer capabilities, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter also features a gorgeous new texture-map engine (check out the blast door on that Assault Transport), and in the end, looks like another great space sim. Star Wars fans could fly at each other this coming Christmas. -T. Nguyen

ABC Sports College Football

We hope slot-obsessed gridiron fans can get their collegiate pigskin fix from the few remaining text-based games available, because the action spectrum currently has all the variety of a

Woody Hayes "3 yards and a cloud of dust" offense. The latest attempt to finish atop the coaches' poll at the end of the season is ABC Sports College Football by OT Sports. This isn't simply a rehash of their ABC Monday Night Football game, either (see the preview of MNF on page

178).

The design team uses a combination of ABC's graphics and their own in-



NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL

house touch to create a look that effectively captures the energy of the college game. At times, you'd swear you were watching commercials of upcoming contests on your TV set.

The offensive and defensive playbooks are appropriately less complex than those of their pro counterpart. And, as you'd

expect from an action game, the play is brisk and appears a bit slanted in favor of the offense. Still, there is plenty going on here to keep any fan happy. wishbone offenses, numerous blitzes, the wide-open Florida passing attack. In addition to many current teams, the player lists go back to the glory days of college football, so you can see how Bear Bryant's great Alabama teams might fare against Lou Holtz's best from Notre Dame. The multimedia support is a treat, featuring commentary from Bob Grease and Keith Jackson, who never seems to run out of charming tales of touchdowns gone by.-T. Coleman





Obsidian

Rocket Science's OBSIDIAN looks like it might be bizarre enough to distinguish itself from the growing herd of *Myst* clones. When the game begins, your friend Max has disappeared, and to retrieve him you must enter a giant, mysterious structure that has appeared in the middle of a forest. Once you pass into the obsidian, you find yourself in a surreal, Escher-like

environment in which you can never quite tell which way is up. As you search for your friend, you'll travel to four different fantasy realms—all well rendered in 3D. The puzzles that we saw in the pre-alpha ran the gamut from simple word puzzles to more difficult space/physics problems, and seemed to be well incorporated into the game's plot. The game is due for the PC and Mac in late October.—J. Green

Outlaws

OUTLAWS is another first for LucasArts—its first hybrid action-adventure game. The Jedi Engine from DARK FORCES combined with the animation style of FULL THROTTLE will make this game look unique. Players will also

be able to wander around the environment in first-person 3D perspective and interact with the characters rather than simply shooting them. The multiplayer aspect will

strictly feature shooting action, but the single-player game sounds more interesting. With a rich plot involving revenge and corruption in the gritty style of a Clint Eastwood movie, this may be the first 3D shooter with a *real* plot.

-T Nguyen



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HANDS ON

These are the products in development we've actually spent some time with. They represent some of the most interesting

titles in the Pipeline, and they are complete enough to actually tell how they're going to play. Most should be released soon.

Microsoft NBA Full Court Press



Ever since NBA Live franchise is a little like the Chicago Bulls these days. Sure they're great, but the lack of competition is really starting to make things dull. Now, with Microsoft's NBA Full Court Press, it looks like a contender is joining the tiny PC basketball league—and in its current beta form, it's already looking like it might outplay the champs.

All 29 NBA teams are available for single game, season and playoff competition, while a very cool practice mode lets you work on your moves (including set plays) in a noncompetitive setting. The game's 2D graphics are cartoony, but sharper than EA's, and the gameplay hits a solid action-oriented groove. The beta's AI and stats were way out of whack (in my first two seasons, the Washington Bullets were the NBA champs), but the designers said that these components

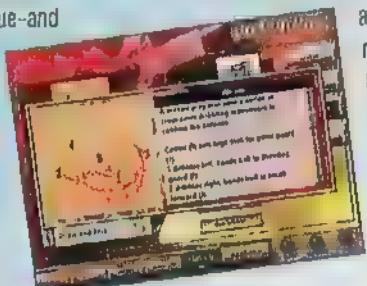
were still being tweaked.

Interface wise, this Win 95 game is a full-on slam dunk, boasting just about the best-designed and most-intuitive screens I've seen on any sports game. Everything from substitutions to playbook changes is just one or two mouse clicks away. The Team

Editor, for adjusting rosters and editing players couldn't be easier—which, in the wake of this summer's trading free-for-all, is very good news. Even better is a button (not functioning in the beta) that promises to let you connect to

Microsoft's Web site to download updated stats without leaving the game. Multiplayer support (up to eight players) and a 100-playbook (each one diagrammed and explained) round out a title that pays attention. EA has a serious chance of taking the PC basketball crown. —J. Green

Microsoft, (206) 882-8080



PIPELINE

10th Planet Bellesda	9/96
ABC Monday Night Football Of Sports	9/96
AUD Blood & Magic Interplay	10/96
Alde De Camp 2 HPS Simulations	Fall 96
Battleground: Sinai Talonsoft	Fall 96
Battles of Alexander Interactive Magic	Spring 97
Betrayal In Antara Sierra	9/96
Callahan's Crosstime Saloon Legend	10/96
Crusader: No Regret Origin	9/96
Dark Earth Mindscape	10/96
Diablo Blizzard	9/96
Dungeon Keeper EA/Bullfrog	9/96
F22 Lightning II Nova Logic	10/96
FPS Football Pro 97 Sierra	11/96
Gene Wars EA/Bullfrog	10/96
Guardians of Destiny Virgin	Fall 96
Flying Nightmares 2 Domark	Winter 96
Heroes of Might and Magic II New World	10/96
History of the World Avalon Hill	Fall 96
IF22 Interactive Magic	Winter 96
IM1A Abrams Interactive Magic	10/96
Interstate 76 Activision	Winter 96
Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II LucasArts	2/97
Jotlighter III Mission Studios	10/96
John Madden 97 EA Sports	Fall 96
Leisure Suit Larry 7 Sierra	11/96
Lords of the Realm II Sierra	11/96
Lost Vikings II Interplay	12/96
Magic: The Gathering MicroProse	Spring 97
Magic of Xanadu Legend	Winter 96
Master of Orion II MicroProse	Fall 96
Machwarrior: Mercenaries Activision	9/96
Monster Truck Madness Microsoft	Fall 96
Myst II Broderbund	Winter 96
NBA Full Court Press Microsoft	9/96
Nemesis Sir Tech	9/96
New Order Epic	Winter 96
NFL Instant Replay Philips	Fall 96
NFL Legends Accolade	Fall 96
Obsidian Rockwell Science	10/96
One Must Fall Epic	Fall 96
Over the Reich Avalon Hill	9/96
Pacific Tide Arsenal	Fall 96
Pod UbiSoft	Fall 96
Privateer: The Darkening Origin	10/96
Red Baron II Sierra	11/96
Return to Krondor 7th Level	Fall 96
Reverence Cyberdreams	Fall 96
Risk! Hasbro Interactive	Fall 96
Scrabble Hasbro Interactive	9/96
Shadow Warrior 3D Realms/FormGen	Fall 96
SimGolf Maxis	Fall 96
Star Craft Blizzard	Winter 96
Star Fleet Academy Interplay	Winter 96
Star GeneralSSI	11/96
Star Trek: Generations MicroProse	9/96
Syndicate Wars EA	9/96
TFX 3 Ocean	Q1/97
Tomb Raiders Domark/Eidos	Winter 96
Toonstruck Virgin/Burst	10/96
Ultima Online Origin	12/96
Vampire Diaries Her Interactive	Fall 96
X-Com 3: The Apocalypse MicroProse	Fall 96
Xenophage Apogee/FormGen	Fall 96
X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter LucasArts	Fall 96
ZuluWar! Incredible Simulations	Fall 96

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HANDS ON

This eagerly anticipated title seemed to be foundering in development purgatory at Virgin, until it was suddenly resurrected under their new internal development group, Burst. It looks to be well worth the wait. Drew Blanc (played by Christopher Lloyd) is an animator who gets sucked into a wacked-out cartoon



►Toonstruck

world where he must save the lands of Cutilopia from the Evil Count Nefarious, with the help of his side-kick, Flux Wildly. While this may sound like another wander through Wonderland for the kiddies, it most certainly is not, given that it features such twisted characters as a dominatrix sheep and a maniacal clown. Toonstruck plays like an homage to the old LucasArts adventures (such as SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD or DAY OF THE TENTACLE)—right down to the onscreen text blurbs and inventory system—but updated with high

quality animation. Nobody looks more at home in a cartoon world than Christopher Lloyd, and his live-action character blends almost seamlessly into the animated environment.

The puzzles are still being polished for more balanced play, but in general they tend toward the “find the object to complete the task” theme, though in this cartoon world, the answer isn’t usually all that straightforward. Players will have to think like Bugs Bunny to get anywhere, which some gamers may find frustrating.

Toonstruck is a relentlessly funny game, and the designers are taking great care to keep the comic timing sharp. The humor leans toward the black comedy of SAM & MAX, with robust wordplay thrown in for good measure. Though certainly not to everyone’s taste, Toonstruck looks like the favored heir to the LucasArts throne.—K. Hedstrom
Virgin Interactive,
(800) 874-4607

PC CD-ROM

►Monster Truck Madness

Sunday! Sunday! Microsoft aims to make this a rowdy racing experience. Utilizing DirectX2, Microsoft plans to use DirectDraw and Direct3D to make it pretty too, with detailed texture maps on the actual trucks and DirectPlay for multi-player support.

So is it an arcade racer or a sim? Well, it's a little early to tell, but the game does have customizable realism options. The early alpha version we saw had a physics model that needs a bit of work (vehicles topple too easily even for monster trucks), but overall, MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS looks quite good. Also, in the grand tradition of Microsoft encyclopedias, you now get an online encyclopedia of monster truck racing. Use the Instant Replay option to compare your crashes to footage of some of “the most spectacular crashes in history.” The MADNESS will roll around (Sundays) this fall.

-T. Nguyen
Microsoft,
(206) 882-8080
Windows 95
CD-ROM



Sunday! Sunday! Microsoft is known for Windows, their flight sims, arcade re-releases, and for Bill Gates's money. Now they want to add a new item to their repertoire: a monster-truck simulator. That's right, Microsoft's first racing game is not a NASCAR or INDYCAR II-clone, it's MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS. With great graphics, authentic sounds including an obnoxious horn and Armey Armstrong's “Sunday!

Bad To The Drone!



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CHAIN LIGHTNING

*The Next Generation Of Combat Simulators
Rides In On The F-22*

by Denny Atkin

When the first production Lockheed Martin F-22A Lightning II enters U.S. Air Force service in the year 2000, it will usher in a new era of American air superiority. Combining stealth, agility, supersonic cruise and advanced avionics that take much of the workload off the pilot, the F-22A will be unmatched in the air combat arena.

What better aircraft, then, to usher in the next generation of flight simulators? That's certainly the popular view among software companies, with four F-22 simulators set for release between now and next spring.

DIAMOND FORMATION

In coming months potential F-22 pilots will be able to choose between F-22 LIGHTNING II, from NovaLogic; F-22 LIGHTNING, from Interactive Magic; TFX3: LIGHTNING STRIKE, from Ocean and DID; and the long-awaited JET FIGHTER III, from Mission Studios. Although they all simulate the same aircraft, each takes a different approach, running the gamut from trying to please the instant-action crowd to those looking for

dead-on realism. Two of the programs run under DOS, and the other two are Windows 95-native games. We take an early look at all four games in the following pages so you can see which one fits your particular pilot style.

Despite the varying levels of realism, none of these games should be intimidating. That's because, despite its sophistication, the F-22 will be a uniquely easy aircraft to fly. When Lockheed and Boeing designed the jet's control systems and avionics package, they set out to create an environment that would allow the pilot to concentrate on the combat task. The computers that direct the F-22's digital fly-by-wire control system help keep the plane from departing from controlled flight, and a new cockpit display system tightly integrates radar, passive sensor, AWACS and JSTARS downlinks, and other information to give the F-22 pilot unrivaled situational awareness. Thrust vectoring gives the aircraft superior agility, and its stealthy design makes it nearly invisible to long-range radar. In short, the plane's easy to fly, and it can spot its enemies before they spot it.

Compared to the accurate simulation of the F-16 Fighting Falcon in MSI's BACK TO BAGHDAD, any of these F-22 sims may initially feel like a simplified arcade game. But a real F-16 pilot who drops into the cockpit of one of the first F-22As will have a similar sensation.

F-22 LIGHTNING II

First off the runway will be NovaLogic's F-22 LIGHTNING II. While previous NovaLogic efforts have tended to skirt the line between simulations and action games, the company is making a concerted effort to ensure that this product will be perceived as a true sim. Slated for release in early September, this MS-DOS game should be a pleasant surprise for those players who wrote off the COMANCHE series as arcade games.



► **FJORD ESCORT** The coastal terrain in NovaLogic's F-22 LIGHTNING II is dazzling, but don't let the scenery distract you from your mission.

That said, F-22 LIGHTNING II is still accessible to the less hard-core sim flyer, and in fact the campaign mode seems geared more toward the casual sim player. Instead of a dynamic campaign or a branching mission tree, F-22 LIGHTNING II features a series of sequential missions, a la COMANCHE.

The game consists of five campaigns, each of which features eight or nine missions. Each campaign is located in a different potential trouble spot: Myanmar (Burma), Siberia, and Serbia were strong candidates for inclusion as this was being written. Rather than changing the next mission depending on the outcome of the previous attack, NovaLogic is working on the theory that your reward for winning the mission is being able to move on to the next one.

Look for these missions to be primarily of an air-to-air variety. That's true to the real F-22, which is an air-superiority fighter first and foremost, with precision ground strike as a secondary role. The F-22 is an extremely expensive aircraft, about \$100 million a pop, so the Air Force will be using the machine primarily on missions involving high-value targets. Look for AWACS attack and escort missions, attacks on priority targets, and defensive dogfighting, as well as occasional ground attacks using the new JDAMS (Joint Direct Attack Munitions) precision-guided bombs.

In addition to the campaign, there will be a US NAVY FIGHTERS-style quick start mode, where you pick the type of mission, the kinds of planes to include and the enemy skill level, and then jump right in.

These missions will take place over a wide variety of terrain types, depending on the campaign. Ocean will give way to green, rolling hills

and then to inland mountains in one area, while another will feature a variety of desert landscapes. Perhaps the most interesting to dogfight over will be the Vietnam-like mountainous jungle environment with its steep, rocky cliffs. Seasons will also come into play, so expect snow cover in some missions.

It's the terrain that's the most striking feature of F-22 LIGHTNING II. (To be fair, all entries here top previous efforts in the genre.) NovaLogic isn't using its trademark Voxel Space technique here, but the terrain graphics are breathtaking nevertheless. There's no ground warping, visible tiling or polygon pop-up here, and because the game is written completely in speedy assembly language, the terrain flies smoothly at 640x480, even on slower Pentium systems. If you do find things jerky, 320x200 and 400x300 resolutions are supported as well. (The latter resolution is great for full-screen displays on 800x600 laptop screens.)

The aircraft look great as well: the F-22 here is by far the most strikingly rendered plane yet seen in a PC simulation. Control surfaces move realistically as you maneuver, and you can watch the thrust vector as you pull on the control stick. Enemy and allied aircraft you'll encounter include AWACS, B-1Bs, F-15s, MiG-27s and Su-27s. All the aircraft are light-source shaded and fully texture-mapped.

Except for a preliminary heads up display (HUD), the cockpit was unfinished in the version that I flew, but NovaLogic plans to accurately model the instruments found in Lockheed's F-22 simulator, including four multifunction displays (MFDs) showing the overall situation, threat status, target information and stores status.

Flight modeling sets new standards for NovaLogic. It's tough to really put a simulation of an advanced aircraft like the F-22 through the wringer, since its digital fly-by-wire controls help keep the plane from departing from controlled flight and because its engines are so powerful that you can pull off maneuvers that would send lesser planes plunging toward the earth. Still, the aircraft does properly lose speed in turns, and stall characteristics seem realistic. NovaLogic says the sim should properly reflect the F-22's nonlinear pitch rate and accurately model the plane's roll velocity and response.

Once you master the F-22's flight characteristics, you'll be able to test your skills against other players. You can fly any of the campaign missions in cooperative mode, or set up melee-style free-for-all air combat. Network, modem and direct serial connections will be supported.

Although the flight model, terrain and graphics engine were solid in the version I tested, the enemy AI wasn't complete, leaving that as the

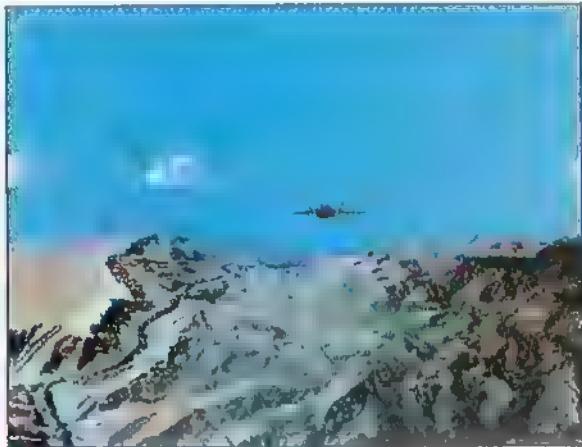


► **TARGET DISPATCHED** An unlucky MiG-27 falls victim to an F-22's AMRAAM missile, never knowing what hit it.

wild card. Assuming the opposing aircraft fly in a challenging and realistic manner (the quality of the now-complete portions of the sim imply that they will) then this first F-22 sim should garner quite a following. Only those who desire a dynamic campaign environment are likely to be disappointed.

IF-22 LIGHTNING

F-22 LIGHTNING marks the return of former MicroProse chief Wild Bill Stealey to the flight sim arena. (Interactive Magic's previous sim efforts, APACHE, HIND, and F-16, are cooperative productions with England's Digital Integration.) This game is a far cry from the simple "kill the primary target, then take out the secondary target" MicroProse sims of yesteryear. IF-22 (the "I" is an Interactive Magic trademark, not part of a real military designation) promises to usher in a number of technological breakthroughs, and to provide the player with a rich, convincing combat environment. Because the game



HEAD FOR THE ROCKIES With satellite images mapped on accurate terrain elevations, IF-22 Lightning's ground sports unprecedented realism.

is still a ways off—it won't ship until the first quarter of 1997—I recently flew to Interactive Magic's headquarters in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, to meet with IF-22's development team and fly an early alpha version.

The most startling initial impression comes from the simulation's terrain system. Where NovaLogic's terrain is representative of the combat arena, and JetFIGHTER 3 uses hand-created textures wrapped on realistic elevation data, IF-22 goes a step further by wrapping real satellite images on top of accurate Digital Elevation Map [why caps—throughout?] data. The alpha test version used a Grand Canyon terrain map, with spectacular results. The final game will send the player on missions in Bosnia, the Persian Gulf and the southwestern corner of the former Soviet Union. Approximately 80,000 square miles (a 400-by-200-mile corridor) of each region will be modeled using photographically accurate 3D terrain.

A welcome feature will be Interactive Magic's unique fractal microtexturing, which will add detail as you fly low to the ground. This will spare you the experience of flying over giant, square pixels that you get when hugging the ground in other sims. Standard graphics will be 640x480 with 256 colors, but if you own a 3D card

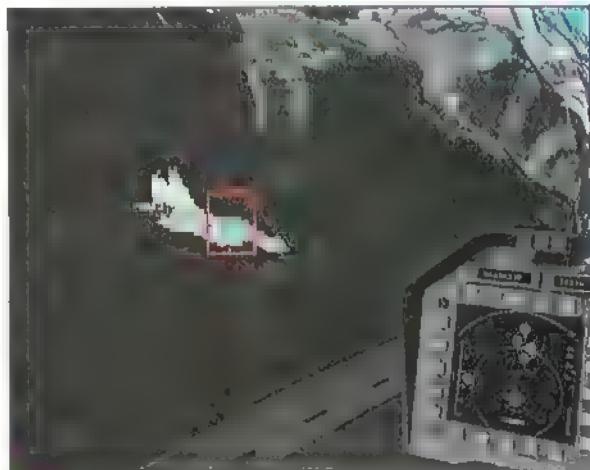
that supports Direct 3D, you'll be treated to resolutions up to 1024x768 with 16-bit color.

IF-22 will use a dynamically generated campaign system, similar to that in EF2000, where the simulation tracks the progress of the ground and air war going on around you. The simulation will examine the current battle situation and generate a list of potential missions. As squadron leader, you'll choose the mission for your flight. Before you take off, you'll be able to modify aircraft weapons load outs, change waypoints to and from the target to avoid radar coverage, and alter other mission parameters. Typical missions should feature four to six aircraft. Many of the missions will be escort assignments, where you'll fly top cover for F-15E Strike Eagles, F-16 Fighting Falcons and A-10 Warthogs. As squadron commander, you'll be able to choose how many F-22s to take along—you can bring reserve aircraft for particularly tough missions.

The development team plans to take special care to emphasize the F-22's stealth abilities. Lockheed touts the aircraft's ability to fire at enemy targets before it's detected—a move the Interactive Magic guys likened to attacking while invisible in an AD&D game. But you'll want to plan your missions carefully, since your "invisibility" won't do you any good if you're flying right next to a massive radar-echo generator like a B-52. IF-22 will model the Lightning's data-link capabilities, which will allow it not only to share threat information with other squadron aircraft but to use AWACS radar to launch AMRAAM missiles stealthily. As campaigns progress, you may be tasked with air-to-ground duties that require you to carry external weapons, sacrificing your stealth abilities for additional firepower.

F-22 will feature a four MFD cockpit panel patterned after Lockheed's F-22 simulator cockpit. The 3D-rendered cockpit will have the added touch of being fully functional—along with the standard keyboard and joystick controls most of the cockpit switches can be activated using the mouse.

The flight model was still a work in progress when I examined the sim. Interactive Magic explained that the actual F-22 performance data is classified, so they're basing the aircraft's performance and



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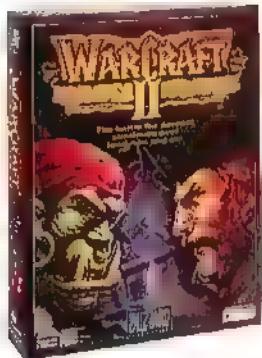
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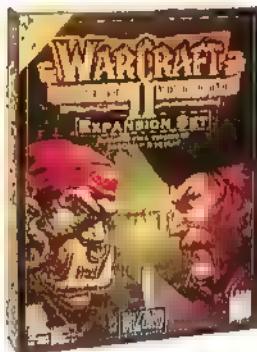


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handling on current F-15 style flight models, extrapolating for the F-22's agility, power and thrust vectoring abilities. Varying levels of realism should make the game accessible for beginners but will hopefully still satisfy the hard-core simulation crowd.

Like the early MicroProse sims, as you progress in your career, you'll be given the opportunity to earn medals and promotions. Although it's too early to make a call, iF-22 is poised to attempt to capture the market by combining the fun factor of classic sims with state-of-the-art technical advances. It sounds like a potentially winning formula.

TFX3: LIGHTNING STRIKE

TFX3: LIGHTNING STRIKE is the working title for the sequel to the **P**remiere Award-winning EF2000. Created by the UK's Digital Image Design and to be distributed in the United States by Ocean, this Windows 95 simulator will build on the foundation laid by



DESERT LIGHTNING TFX3 will use a refined version of the EF2000 graphics engine; look for the pixelation evident in this early alpha to disappear.

EF2000 and the TactCom mission planner add on (see next month's Simulations column for details on TactCom). This time around you've traded your EuroFighter 2000 in for the even hotter F-22A Lightning, and you're off to defend American interests in the Red Sea region.

The terrain covered by the TFX3 campaign includes Ethiopia, Sudan and parts of Iran, Iraq and Kuwait. However, the political situation changes each time you start a new campaign, so your allies may differ from game to game. Be careful about offending neutral countries—one misplaced AMRAAM could make a new enemy.

TFX3 will give you much more control over your mission planning than EF2000 did. Waypoints and cruise altitudes can be altered based on intelligence data, and you can designate targets yourself. You'll also be able to assign additional flights for strike, escort and Wild Weasel (anti-missile radar) missions.

Alternatively, you can plan missions by manning an AWACS control station, where you can actively vector aircraft to targets. DID is aiming to create a tactical command experience with a HARPOON 2 level of intensity at the AWACS station. The difference here is that you can jump into the cockpit of one of the F-22s after your orders

are in place.

TFX3 will feature an updated graphics engine, significantly enhanced from the preliminary screen shots that accompany this article. Look for light-source shading and shadows on terrain, as well as a new smoothing feature designed to eliminate pixelation at low altitudes. All the aircraft models have been redone, adding bitmapped textures and significantly more detail. At the moment, it doesn't look like DID will support Direct 3D. Instead, TFX3 will directly support the 3DFx graphics chipset, providing 16-million-color graphics at high resolutions.

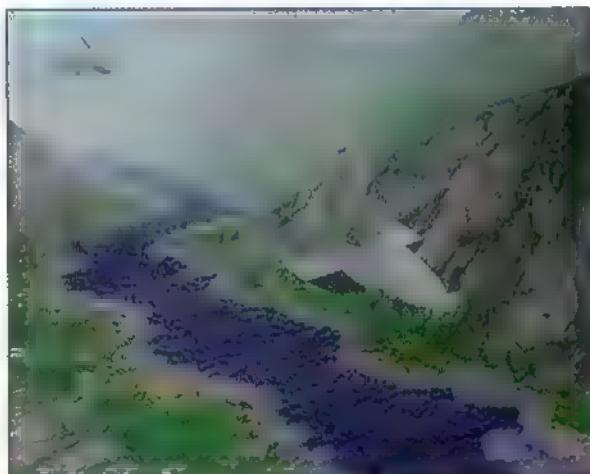
Finally, look for a significantly enhanced multiplayer experience. Instead of the King of the Skies free-for-all, players will now be able to form teams. Each side gets an airbase, an AWACS aircraft, a tanker and ground defenses. The objective will be to land on an opponent's airbase to capture it. Tactics are up to the players. Do you spread your team out on defense or drive straight for the enemy airbase? And, when all is said and done, TFX3 will present you with animated victory or defeat animations rather than the simple, disappointing "You Won" text messages.

The furthest out of the titles here, TFX3 is currently slated to ship around March 1997. If you want an early taste of TFX3's technology, check out SUPER EF2000 for Windows 95, which should be available early this fall.

JETFIGHTER III

When we previewed JetFighter III in our December 1995 issue, the product was on the leading edge of flight simulation technology. Had it shipped in January, as developer Mission Studios originally planned, it would indeed have pushed the state of the art forward. Now slated to ship October 1, this MS-DOS game is in the middle of the technology pack. It may not cause your jaw to drop, but it still promises to be a solid, entertaining game.

Of all the sims covered here, JF3 plays loosest with the facts by basing your F-22 squadron on an aircraft carrier. Although a naval variant has been proposed, as it stands the F-22 is purely a land



FIREFOX REVISITED Although terrain can be handy for defensive maneuvers in JetFighter 3, it's probably too late for this Flanker-pursued F-22.

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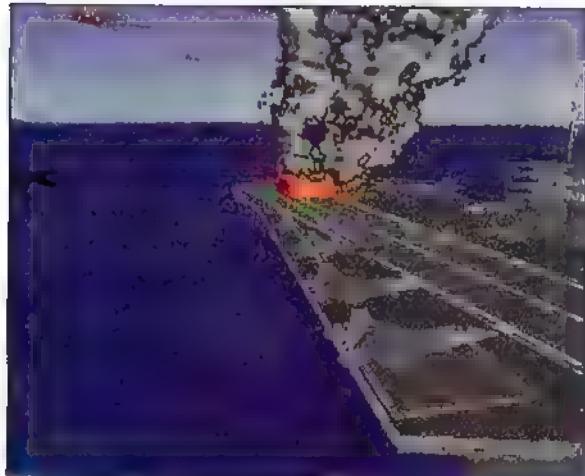
The demo is also available on the internet at
<ftp://mpgn.com/Gaming/ADND/CD-ROM-demo>

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On this month's demo disk!





ON SHIP! JetFighter 3 bases its F-22s on an aircraft carrier, but it looks like you'll be needing a runway to land on today...

based fighter. In addition, the weapons loads in the pre beta versions don't match the real F-22's capabilities. If you're a purist, you'll want to look elsewhere, but if you don't mind a little fiction tossed in to enhance gameplay, JF3's rich mission environment should be a good draw. In the realism department this is no SU-27 FLANKER, but then neither is it as simplified as JetFighter II.

Since the original preview (available on CGW's Web site) was written, Mission has added high-res graphics that improve the look of JF3 dramatically. The over 3.5 million miles of accurately modeled terrain (based on real-world Digital Elevation Maps) precludes the use of satellite imagery, so JF3 uses tiled, drawn textures instead. The two included campaigns are set in Cuba and Chile, and the terrain covers those countries as well as parts of Florida, Argentina and Antarctica. The campaigns are scripted rather than dynamic, but they feature a wide variety of branching missions, so there should be plenty of replayability. An add-on disc will add new terrain areas as well as multiplayer play.

In addition, there's now a new aircraft, the F/A-18 Hornet, and programmer Bob Dinneman might be able to slip the F-14 in there as well before the product's ship date.

If you're trying to accurately relive the F-22 driver experience, this isn't your sim, but if you enjoyed US Navy FIGHTERS or ATF, JetFighter III could very well provide a wild ride.

CGW ONLINE

The full preview of JetFighter III is available on CGW's Web site at <http://www.zdnet.com/gaming/content/951116/rev4/main.html>

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HELLBENDER is a fast-paced, action-oriented game that challenges you to survive amidst a chaotic landscape of exploding tanks, burning planes, and exploding tanks. You must maneuver your tank through a series of obstacles and challenges, all while avoiding enemy fire and explosions. The game features a variety of tanks, each with unique abilities and strengths. The graphics are impressive, with detailed models and realistic physics. The sound effects are also top-notch, providing an immersive experience. Overall, HELLBENDER is a fun and addictive game that is perfect for amateur gamers.

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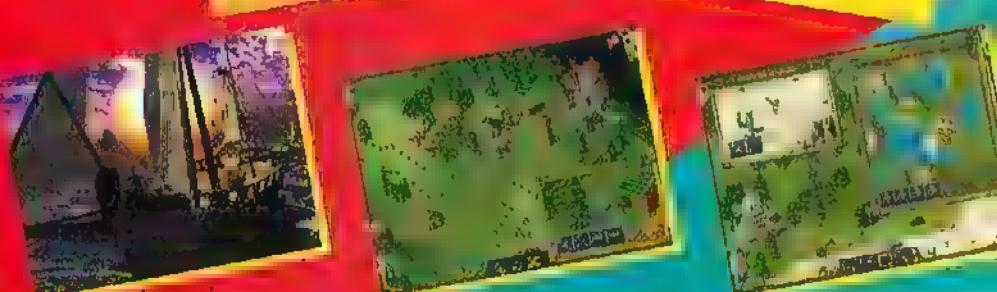
Computer Game Review

"The Settlers II is a great game that's sure to keep you entertained for hours."

Strategy Plus, June '96

"The Settlers II is a great game that's sure to keep you entertained for hours."

PC Power, April '96



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When you read Air Force publications covering the Lockheed-Martin F-22A Lightning II fighter program, you can almost sense the writer drooling on the keyboard. Now that Russian fighters have caught up with their American counterparts in many respects—in fact, an Su-27 Flanker can detect an F-15 before the F-15 sees it—the Air Force is anxious to regain its air superiority. The F-22A is the dream fighter designed to do just that.

Among the fighter's advanced features are supercruise (the ability to cruise at Mach 1.58 without using fuel-sucking afterburners), stealth thrust vectoring for superior maneuverability, and an extremely advanced avionics package that greatly reduces a pilot's workload while giving unprecedented situational awareness. The F-22A is designed to use its stealth to move undetected into firing range of its target, launch its missile and get away before the enemy knows what hit him.

The F-22 is a big fighter: 44 feet, 6 inches in wingspan; 62 feet, 1 inch in length; 16 feet, 5 inches in height. Despite that size, its classified radar signature is likely much smaller than that of your average bird.



Lockheed Martin YF-22 prototype.

Simulation	Player Aircraft	Campaign	Multiplayer?	OS	Estimated Ship Date
F-22 LIGHTNING II	F-22	Linear	LAN, modem	DOS	September '96
IF-22 LIGHTNING	F-22	Dynamic	LAN	Win 95	First quarter '97
TFX3 LIGHTNING STRIKE	F-22, AWACS	Dynamic	LAN, modem	Win 95	March '97
JETFIGHTER III	F-22, F/A-18*	Branching	As add-on (LAN, modem)	DOS	October '96

*The F-14 may be added before the program ships.

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Havoc by Reality Bytes: www.realbytes.com

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Terminal Velocity by 3D Realms Entertainment and Terminal Reality: www.3drealms.com and www.terminalreality.com.

SIM CITY 2000

SimCity 2000 by Maxis: www.maxis.com

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The age of multiplayer gaming is here. Once you've battled even a mediocre human opponent in a computer game, the most talented artificially intelligent enemies seem like wimps. Human opponents are supremely unpredictable, and you can't beat the sheer joy of hearing them squeal in frustration as you nail them with

a missile again.

Best of all, we're quickly entering the age where it's more common to find multiplayer options in games than not. As we get buried in more and more Internet hype, expect the single-player-only game to go the way of the 5 1/4-inch disk.

Next month, we'll focus on online games that give you the opportunity to frag opponents across the country. This time we're concentrating on battles up close and personal—network games. Once the realm of after-hours play in the office, network gaming is creeping into more and more homes. With many gamers having more than one computer in the household and the per-computer price of the network equipment needed dropping to the cost of a single game, there aren't many obstacles to setting up a home net anymore. Many single-PC owners are even installing network cards and hauling their systems to central loca-

tions for weekend net melees. We'll show you what you need to get started in personal network gaming, and how to set it all up.

We'll start by looking at the incentives for diving into all this—some of the best multiplayer games on the market today. We'll show you what you need to get them up and running, and then give you some tips on how to annihilate your victims—uh, we mean beat your friends in a friendly multiplayer match. Welcome to the real next level.

CONTENTS

- Quake
- Need For Speed SE
- Duke Nukem 3D
- MechWarrior 2
- MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries
- Advanced Tactical Fighters
- Warcraft II
- Command & Conquer
- Sid Meier's CivNet
- Building Your Own Game Net

QUAKE

Come See The Carnage Cabaret

by Dave Salvator

Unless you've been under a rock, you've no doubt heard about QUAKE, id software's latest horrific hell spawn, the shareware edition of which was recently unleashed on the impatient gaming public.

Many gamers were priming their pumps with QUEST, an initial release of several DeathMatch levels that at least gave them something to gnaw on until the shareware was pushed out the door. But the wait is, well, almost over. The rumor mill has the full, registered version of QUAKE shipping sometime in August, so with any luck, it will be out by the time you read this. The shareware edition has four ghoulish levels featuring bone-crushing new weapons and a cast of nasties ghastly enough to make Freddie Krueger feel inadequate. Flendish foes aside, one of QUAKE's coolest components is its IPX- and TCP/IP-based multiplayer capabilities, because human opponents make for a more target-rich environment—and of course there's the launt factor.

id software, (214) 613 3589, www.idsoftware.com

SERVING UP QUAKE

To launch a TCP/IP-based multiplayer fragfest, you can run QUAKE in a DOS window under Windows 95 or load the Beame and Whiteside DOS TCP/IP stack. Each has its relative merits and downsides. Windows 95's TCP/IP stack is pretty easy to configure, and you simply edit the Q95.BAT file to enable QUAKE to talk to Win 95's TCP/IP stack. Of course, running QUAKE in a Windows 95 DOS window may slow your frame rate, since parts of the OS are still in memory and accessing the CPU.

The Beame and Whiteside DOS TCP/IP stack is the only real-mode stack that QUAKE will use, and because you're running in DOS with



NICE PANTS Using the No Friendly Fire feature, players can fight each other long as your fellow player has the same pants preference.

much less overhead from Windows 95, you should get better overall performance. But DOS TCP/IP stacks are notorious for being a royal pain to configure and get running, and Beame and Whiteside's is no exception. What's more, latency over the net can be a pain, especially if one player has an especially slow connection.

QUAKE can also talk to Kali, which can run IPX based games over TCP/IP (see Loyd Case's Technology column this month for the low-down on Kali). Once you've started Kali, launch QUAKE, and create or join a network game as if you were running over IPX. Closer to home, you can play QUAKE over your IPX network, and getting a match started is pretty straightforward.

QUAKE has two kinds of servers. Listen and Dedicated. A Listen server is run on a player's machine—usually the fastest computer—which acts as the server in addition to running the game. But if you've got a spare PC that's pretty fast, it can act as a Dedicated server, handling all server duties, leaving all players' machines free of the additional overhead. QUAKE will allow up to 8 players when running on a Listen server, and 16 players on a Dedicated server. Type "Quake-listen" to launch a Listen server, and "Quake-dedicated 16" to launch a Dedicated server with support for up to 16 players.

In setting up a multiplayer game, QUAKE offers several options: DeathMatch vs. cooperative, difficulty level, starting level, and team-play. The team-play options enable and disable Friendly Fire. When No Friendly Fire is selected, your shots won't injure your teammates (Members of the same team all wear the same color pants.)

Recently, id inked a deal with Mpath so that QUAKE will run over the Internet through the Mplayer Web-based online gaming system. But you don't need an online service to run QUAKE over the internet. You can enter the IP number of a server where QUAKE is running and connect directly.

What about multi-player strategy? Well, because QUAKE has so many networking options, we've covered those here. For strategy tips on how to ferociously frag your friends, check out the Action section on page 142.



SMART-AXE BEHAVIOR With both the Pentagram of Protection and Quad Damage active, even an axe is a formidable weapon.

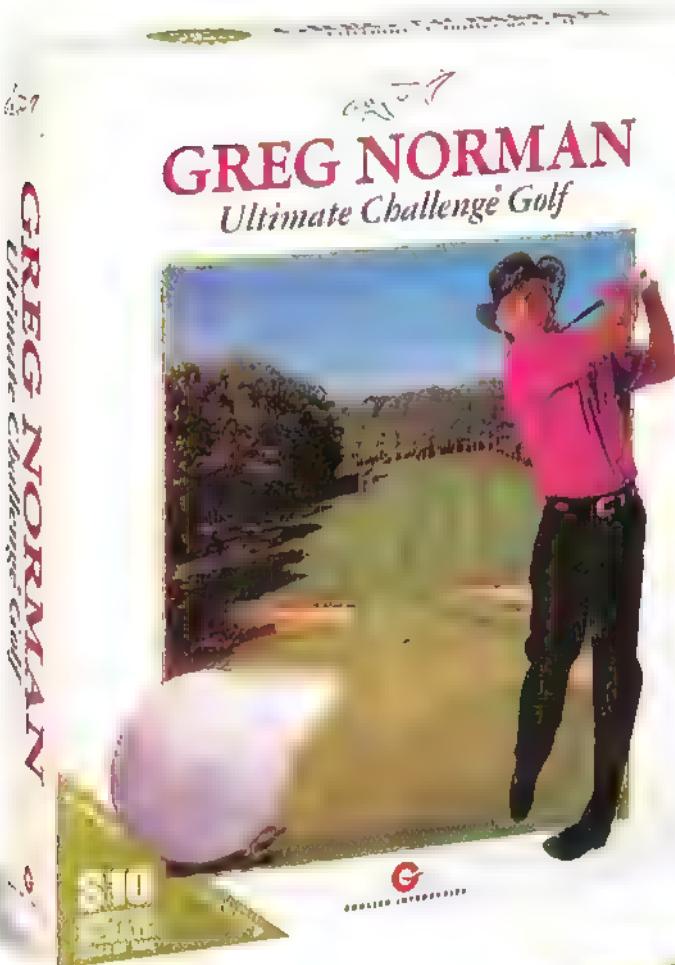
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NEED FOR SPEED: SE

Want To Know Who's The Fastest?

By Terry Coleman

The Lamborghini could best me on the straightaways, but its design, though eye-popping, left it turning like a warm slug. So I waited for my chance and blew by my adversary, the Dodge Viper responding to my every command, becoming a blue streak as I jetted across the finish line mere yards away. My silicon opponents had little to say, but the human drivers were rather critical. It seems I had "bounced" a couple of them while negotiating the final turn. Hope their insurance is paid up for the next race...

While admittedly lacking the painstaking accuracy of say, NASCAR RACING, NEED FOR SPEED packs a lot of detail into its arcade racing framework. The learning curve is moderate—it's fairly easy to jump into a car and drive competently (with the possible exception of those who crafted their driving skills in L.A. or New York). But to win consistently the game requires enough skill that you have to constantly refine your techniques.

The mechanically inclined can even fiddle with the transmission without needing a Ph.D. from the Indy 500 racing institute. The cars do handle quite differently, so that a lot of the fun-and-strategy-comes from figuring out which vehicle runs best on the various tracks. The main problems with the original game are more than adequately dealt with here: Several new tracks have been added, you have eight cars instead of two from which to choose, and the multiplayer options let you compete against up to seven other human would-be Richard Petty's or a mix of human and computer opponents.



►ELASTIC COLLISION Bouncing off a hillside is a great way to shake up enemy cars in a tight race.



►DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME When you see a pileup, don't panic! Simply right through it; remember, this is make-believe.

So put the pedal to the metal, and be happy that EA gave us a properly tuned sequel, rather than just a new paint job and added chrome.

Electronic Arts, (415) 571-7171, www.ea.com

HIGH-SPEED NETWORK RACING

NEED FOR SPEED: DELUXE EDITION lets you play net games from one CD—but everyone but the "CD holder" must install 170+ MB of graphics and sound to their hard drives. The big decision here is finding the connection that lets you glide down the track most smoothly. Your best bet is with a Winsock IPX connection, which has the added advantage of being able to transfer data quickly. We had some lockups with DOS IPX, although your "net driver mileage" may vary.

Because this arcade game simulates a 3D environment without taking advantage of newer 3D video card technology, you really need at least a fast 2 MB video card or you're going to watch the frame rate tumble like a 'Verte slipping on an oil spill. And if you want to install less than the 173 MB maximum to your hard drive, you'd better have at least a quad-speed drive (our best results were with the high performance six-speed Plextor).

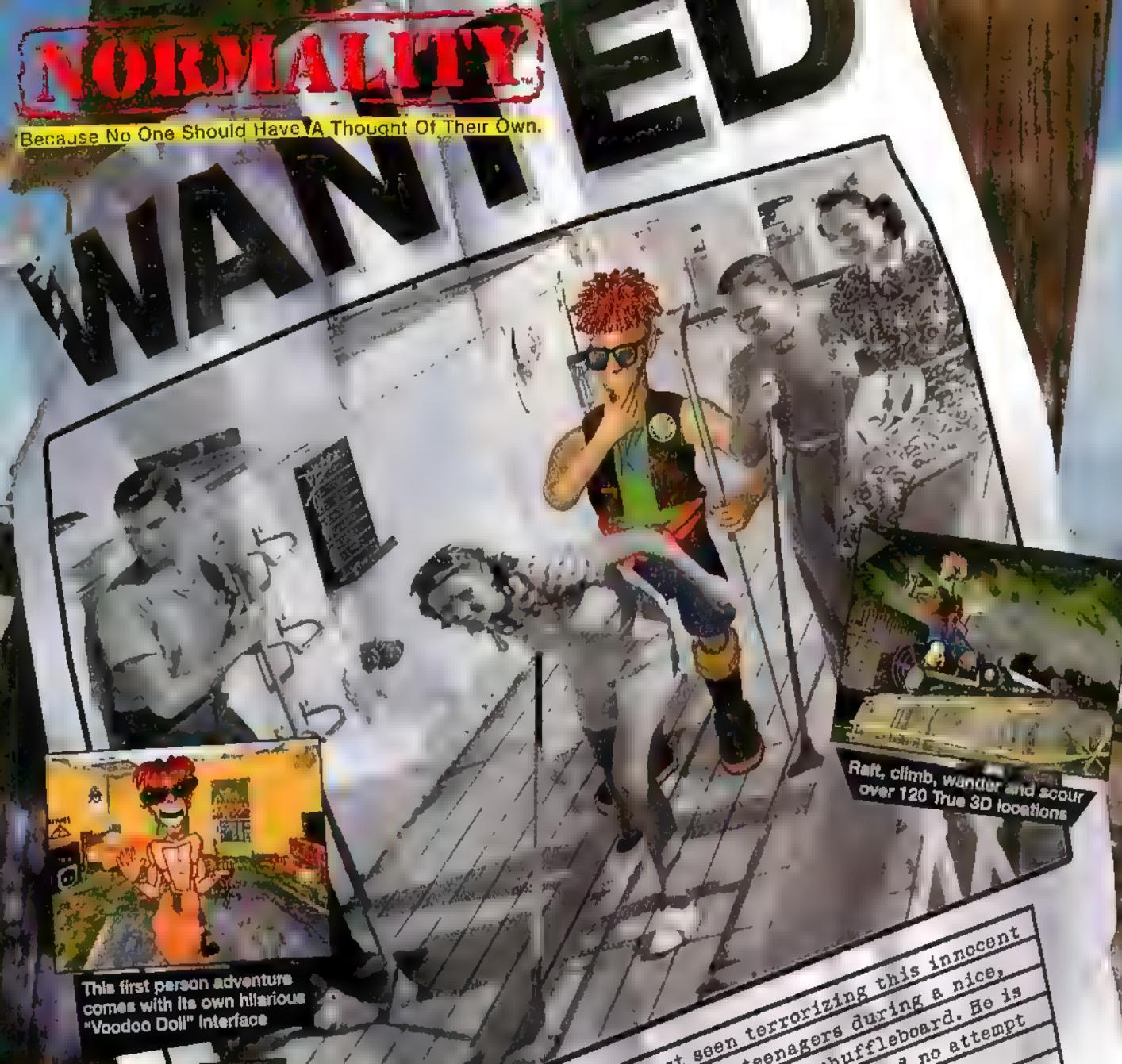
As far as processor speed goes, we had to turn down the detail level on an older P100 to keep up with the pack. The moral here is, if you insist on racing your 486 against your friend's P133, don't expect to be competitive.

Finally, your version of Windows 95 may not properly install the DirectX2 drivers correctly the first time. So go through the installation routine twice to make sure all the video and audio drivers make their way onto your system.

GEARING UP FOR A WILD RIDE

It's easier to start with automatic transmissions, but switch to manual as soon as you have the controls down. You'll find it more challenging at first, but once you get the timing down, there's nothing more exhilarating than shifting down into second gear and passing your adversaries while going up a hill.

The physics are pretty darn good for an arcade game, but the realism isn't. After flipping a car, you can bounce right back up. Use this to your advantage. Be aggressive, and have fun!



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NYP3

Suspect Name: "Kent"

Sex: male

Height: 5' 9"

Weight: 157 lbs

Eyes: Under Sunglasses

Hair: Flaming Red

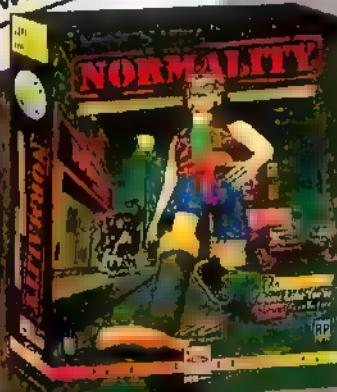
Age: 20-Something

Last seen terrorizing this innocent group of teenagers during a nice, normal game of shuffleboard. He is extremely abnormal and no attempt should be made to subdue the suspect. If you see him, contact the Norm Police immediately and run far away, it could get ugly.

The Normality Police Can Be Contacted At: <http://www.interplay.com>



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DUKE NUKEM 3D

Rip 'Em A New One

by Timo Nguyen and Dan Salvato

DUKE NUKEM's got legs, and those boots were made for stompin'. Despite QUAKE's release, DUKE still enjoys top billing from many multiplayer commandos (especially those with 486s). With weapons like the pipe bomb and laser trip mines (which are begging for net-play use), a fiendishly detailed and interactive environment, and perhaps the funniest Remote Ridicule system to date, DUKE is a multiplayer maniac's dream. The thrill of floating above an opponent who just ran into your Hotduke trap surrounded with pipe bombs and lapping Alt-F8 to say "Haha, wasted" is something no other game can match. Taken as a whole, DUKE NUKEM 3D is the best net action game other than QUAKE on the market today.

Formgen/3D Realms, (602) 443-4109, www.3drealms.com

DUKING IT OUT WITH THE NETWORK

For multiplayer action, you have the head-to-head options of playing via modem or serial cable. But the real fun begins when you have anywhere from three to eight players slugging it out. DUKE has two options for bringing additional players on board. You can run DUKE on your IPX-based network, or if you're looking for opponents in faraway places, 3D Realms has a deal with the TEN online gaming service for DUKE matches over the Internet. (We'll be taking a closer look at TEN and other online gaming players in our next issue.)

DUKE doesn't require you to be logged on to a server, you just need to have an IPX protocol stack running. Check out our "Building Your Own Game Network" feature on page 87 for in-depth details on network configuration. In the meantime, here are the quick-and-dirty steps you'll need to configure DUKE.

DUKE's IPX gaming functionality is limited, in that it doesn't allow dynamic entry of new players once the match has started, and you



COAST IS CLEAR: That's the safe way to clear bases in distance.

must start a net game from the Setup utility rather than from the game. Players can dynamically leave during a net game, though.

To start a network game, launch the Setup utility in your DUKE3D subdirectory. From there select Network Game. In this menu, you can change the number of players (from two to eight) or tweak other properties. All players can also change player name, select a custom made User Level, put in a new set of taunts to DUKE's infamous Remote Ridicule system and change the text of taunt macros.

If your network is supporting several DUKE matches simultaneously, you may need to specify a network socket number, or DUKE will attach you to the first match it sees. The network socket number can be any four-digit number; client players will attach to a server using that same number. All other players will then "connect" to this server, and when the designated number of players have attached, the fun begins. Once all players have arrived at DUKE's main menu, the server player, called the Master, sets the level parameters.

The Master can set the starting level, whether the game will be cooperative or a DeathMatch, and whether there will be monsters to keep you company during a DeathMatch. The Master can also specify to start the net game on a user-designed level, if one has been created. One cool thing about DUKE's network play: If the Master decides to flee, the remaining players can stay and slug it out. So have at it!

"COME GET SOME..."

Know your weapons, and use them effectively. The two best all-around weapons are the Shrinker and the RPG. The Shrinker is an extremely powerful gun; it only takes one or two shots to shrink opponents, and then you can just step on them. The RPG is powerful, and it's something you can find pretty quickly in just about every level. It shoots a bit slowly, but one to three direct shots will usually "gib" your opponent. Just be sure not to fire from too close.

The rest are a mixed bag. Both pipe bombs and laser trip mines can be used to make great traps. The shotgun can be a standby, like in DOOM, but its best range is up close and personal. The chain gun is good for suppression and for spraying in wide open areas (like the Stadium). The freeze gun is a nice concept, but too many hits are needed to freeze someone, and they can ricochet and hit you. The only reason to prefer the RPG over the Devastator is that the Devastator eats up its rockets like there's no tomorrow. If you have the ammo and your opponent is cornered, just let them rockets fly.



TRAP TROUBLE: Here we see a particularly nasty trap constructed by an AI enemy. It's a case for Mr. Pipe Bomb.

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39876 F15 Token Tactical Stick	67	
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CGW SEPT 98 Page 2

NETMECH FOR MECH- WARRIOR 2

Meching The Best of It

by Greg Fortune

So, you're feeling a little cocky since conquering your enemies and becoming Khan of your clan? Are you worthy? Now it's time to prove it, freebirth! What could be better than trying your friends with a 75-Ion BattleMech? The NetMECH add-on for Activision's MechWarrior 2 features both team and free-for-all missions, with a wide variety of objectives to brawl over. This is a Deathmatch style slugfest, with no AI mechs present on the battlefield. Don't worry, you'll probably find your human opponents a bigger challenge than AIs anyway (not to mention a lot more fun to launt after you blast one of their legs off!) You are free to use the custom mechs you've built in the standalone version of MechWarrior 2, but you cannot use mech designs from the GHOST BEAR'S LEGACY expansion pack in NetMECH. Look for that capability in the upcoming MechWarrior 2: MERCENARIES missions (see page 76). So strap on your neural helmet, mechwarrior, and let's take a look at what it takes to make this baby run.

Activision, (310) 473 9200, www.activision.com

MECH A CONNECTION!

First, be warned that the version of NetMECH that's bundled with the Win 95 version of MechWarrior 2 won't talk to the DOS version, due to its use of Microsoft's DirectPlay networking routines. Setup on an IPX network is pretty painless, but if your friends are using the DOS version, you'll be playing solo. A ray of hope for Win 95 MechWarrior



► HOT GUNS The PPC is a deadly weapon, but it's heat intensive. Make sure you load up with heat-sinks or you'll shut down before victory.



► ARMED AND DANGEROUS Standard mechs load up with a variety of weapons, so taking them out will mean taking your opponents' worth of firepower.

2 players. The DOS version of NetMECH will work with your copy of the game, although you will lose any custom cockpit controls you have configured.

I recommend that you install the NetMECH package into the same directory as your MechWarrior 2 installation. If you follow this advice, you'll be able to use all of your custom mech designs and cockpit settings in your network games. You'll need to make any changes from the configuration screens of the standalone product, so make your adjustments before you link up. Once you are ready to get online, you need to decide how you wish to connect. If you have access to a LAN, you can link a maximum of eight people using the IPX protocol. If you have a 9600-bps modem or better (14.4-Kbps recommended), you can either play with three other MechWarriors via Dwango or against one other person by dialing them directly. Your last option is to connect with a null-modem cable, so that you can taunt your opponent both onscreen and verbally.

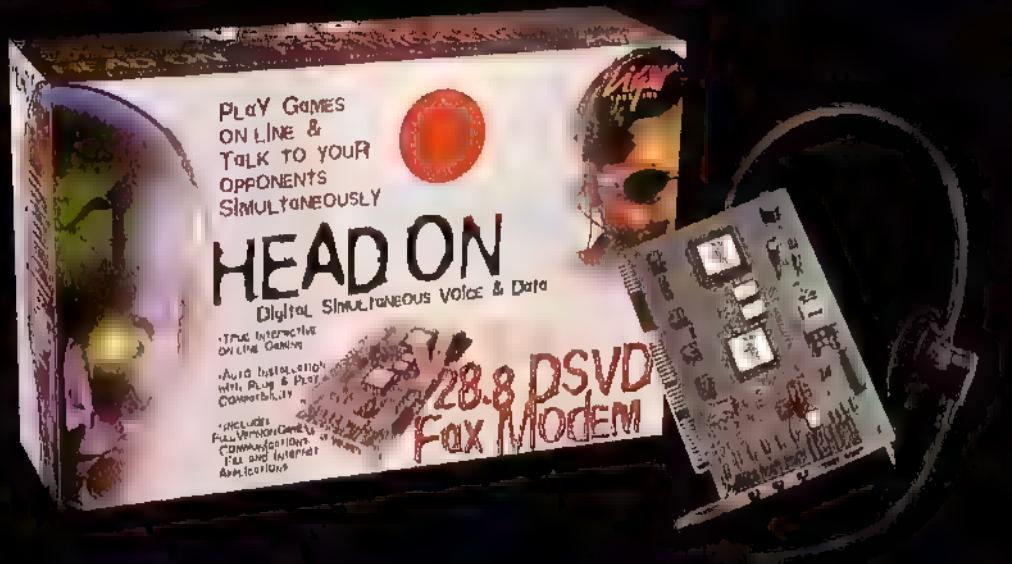
MECH A BREAK FOR IT

Like many great multiplayer games, NetMECH is simply an extension of its single-player predecessor. The skills you have learned reaching this point in your career will serve you well on the battlefields ahead.

If you are fighting a single human opponent, keep your eyes open for opportunities and your mind open to the unconventional tactics you are sure to face in your battles with these inner-sphere scum. Keep one eye on your heat meter and pick your shots carefully; three rapid misses followed by a hit are often worse than a single miss, due to the heat you will accumulate. Group your weapons wisely, as different types of weapon require different amounts of lead for your shot to hit true.

If you're playing on a LAN or via Dwango and have more than two players, you'll need to work with someone as a team to win the day. Even in a free-for-all, don't be surprised if some of your opponents form temporary alliances for the purpose of thinning the pack. You don't get bonus points for dying with your honor intact, so be prepared to form alliances of your own to counter these kinds of tactics. In team play, keep your lines of communication open and coordinate your actions with your slammates. The clan that forms an organized planned attack will quickly gain a tactical advantage over the clan with no plan for attack or defense.

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MW 2: MER-CENARIES

*Activision Mechs You Pay
In The Prequel To MECHWARRIOR 2*

by Trickey Nguyen

In MECHWARRIOR 2, it was all about honor and glory. In MECHWARRIOR 2: GHOST BEAR'S LEGACY, it was about pride and heritage. While these are noble, worthy ideals to fight wars over, MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES, gives you the most motivational incentive for lighting a war: cold, hard cash.

In MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES, you portray the captain of one of the mercenary groups during the turbulent year of 3039, 18 years before the events chronicled in MECHWARRIOR 2. In this prequel, the clans are advancing, the Inner Sphere houses are busy fighting each other, and your purpose is to profit from everyone else's skirmishes. Your ultimate goal is to become one of the elite mercenary groups that will be contracted by COMSTAR or another Inner Sphere group for the epic Battle of Tukayyid.

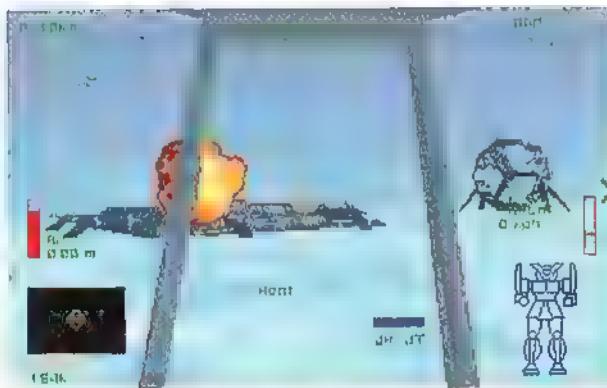
WATCH FOR FALLING MECHS

MERCENARIES features a significantly enhanced update of the original MECHWARRIOR 2 engine. Detailed textures flow across the landscape, and the mechs now sport textures on individual components, as well as insignia. The new multiple-light sourcing is best seen when firing a stream of missiles in a dark city; the addition of a particle system yields missile smoke trails and richer explosions. An improved night-vision mode uses a more efficient infrared sensor, instead of the sickly green phosphorous-type light amplification of the original game. Finally, a tweaked physics model means that, in certain cases, blowing a leg off a mech will result in said mech falling to the ground. The sight of a mech struggling on the ground, waiting to be finished off, is one that a ruthless merc will glory in.

CASH OR CREDIT?

Besides the engine enhancements, Activision has dramatically altered the basic flow of the game. Before, when fighting for the clans, you were only the military end; all expenses were taken care of by the government and the laborers. With the new economic system, you literally have to work for your parts. Your missions are now paid contracts from various parties. The money you earn will be used to pay for your mechs, your technicians, your repairs, your weapons, even more pilots.

This addition of money is only one cog in the wheel of the new resource-management nature of the game. Since you have to pay for everything now, you will have to be more careful about weapons and damage. Damage sustained in combat must be repaired by paid techs, which means money out of your pocket—and that's assuming



'SNOW SWEAT' On top of everything else, MERCENARIES will have to deal with the weather, thanks to MERCENARIES' new particle graphics system.



'EXPLOSIVE IMPROVEMENTS' No more boring polygons—messing around in the MERCENARIES world is lovingly texture-mapped.

you purchased the spare parts and brought them with you from home base when you went into the field. MERCENARIES will also feature salvage, which means head-shot kills will be rewarded with new arms and legs to graft onto damaged mechs. This will be a key factor in certain missions, and will allow you to obtain enemy technology and get some free parts from a battle.

STORY MECH-ANICS

Perhaps the best improvement in MERCENARIES is the branching story line. Instead of the "replay the mission until you get it right" routine found in the original, the story line now branches: Your performance in a mission affects your mission choices later in the game. Look for more surprises in missions in this incarnation—not everything will turn out to be what it seems.

Add to that Novice Mode, which will let casual players who don't want to deal with economic realities jump in and play, the Instant Action option (the merc's answer to the clan's "Trial of Grievance"), 32 new mechs (in addition to those in MECHWARRIOR 2 and GHOST BEAR'S LEGACY) unique to the Inner Sphere and the mercenary groups, and the chance to engage in the biggest, most famous battle in Battletech history: The Battle of Tukayyid.

This fall, clanners will see just how cool the gritty and money-lined life of a merc is.

Activision, (310) 473-9200, www.activision.com



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ADVANCED TACTICAL FIGHTERS

Mixing It Up At Mach 2

by Denny Atkins

Advanced Tactical Fighters (ATF) has the balance of realism and accessibility that makes it a natural for network gaming. It's not a hard sim to get up to speed in, so you can easily fill out its maximum of eight players with flight-sim novices.

The novice pilots don't have to feel like targets, though. Because of the huge variety of planes in ATF, you can give the newbies the hottest planes in the sky, such as F-22A Lightning IIs or Dassault Rafales, and slick the old-timer aces in museum pieces like F-4 Phantoms or MiG-21s. In all, you'll find 90 different aircraft models available in multi-player mode, from experimental fighters to bombers and transports.

The Quick Mission builder lets you set up raw, head-to-head combat either with two teams competing or in an anything-goes free-for-all. Victory conditions are adjustable and include total kills (by player or team), total damage delivered to opponents, or the kill ratio (kills inflicted versus deaths suffered). You can limit the number of revivals each player gets, and set a delay interval between death and revival. You can also adjust the distance from the fight at which a revived player reappears and what kinds of armament that player will have.

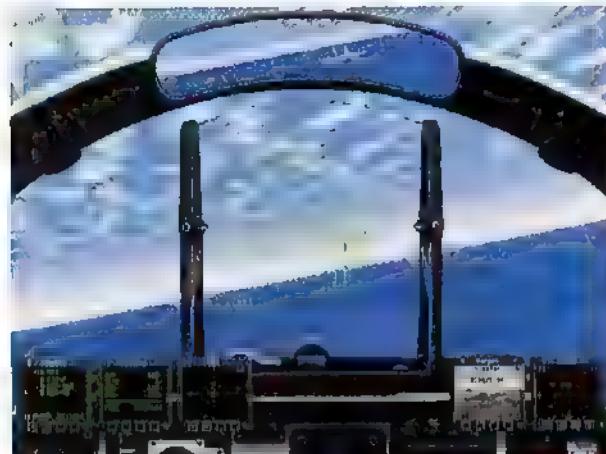
Multi-player single missions are also available, for instance, where one group of players would be tasked with defending a group of tanks while another tries to take them out.

All these options make ATF a blast, whether you're looking for a quick aerial frag fest or an afternoon of tournament combat.

Jane's/Electronic Arts, (415) 571-7171, www.ea.com



HOG WILD With a massive (if unrealistic) load of 12 Sidewinder missiles, the A-10 Warthog is good choice for multi-player mode.



MIRROR DANCE The rear-view mirror is an especially useful framing mechanism...in multi-player action it's too easy to get confused about what's in front of you.

GETTING CONNECTED

ATF requires a network with IPX support for play with more than two players. (Two-player games are possible with a simple modem connection or a direct serial link.) Note that ATF will not run under any version of Windows, so you'll need DOS mode IPX drivers for network games.

For two to eight users, you can use Thin Ethernet, an inexpensive setup that requires only an Ethernet card and T-adapter for each computer, two terminators, and Thin Ethernet (coaxial) cable. This setup avoids the need for a network hub, but it's slower and will bog down as you add users. If you have multiple ATF games going on a network, with a total of more than eight players, you'll need to go to a full-blown 10BaseT (or 100BaseT) setup with a network hub.

KING OF THE SKIES

The best way to rule the skies in ATF is take the most maneuverable aircraft. Fly the A-10, EF2000, F-22, Harrier or X-29 and you'll be able to turn inside less agile opponents. The X-31 and X-32 are also highly maneuverable, but manual thrust vectoring is too hard to take advantage of in the heat of combat.

Load up on AIM-9X Sidewinder missiles, since most of your combat will be at close range. The heavily armored A-10 is a particularly vicious weapons platform; you can arm it with up to 12 Sidewinders, along with its massive 30mm cannon.

Although ATF supports only eight players per session, you can run multiple ATF games on the same network. If you have a large number of players, you can use tournament-style play to get everyone in on the competition. The winning team can challenge the winners of the other games in an ongoing sports-tournament fashion, until everyone is eliminated except the final victor. (Meanwhile, eliminated pilots can continue to play in separate games.)

In single-player mode, ATF normally gives you only 14 planes to choose from, but if you want to practice flying the more esoteric aircraft before the big net game, just press the secret keys. Holding down the Ctrl, Alt and Shift keys on the right side of the keyboard, click Quick Mission, then click Cancel. Hold down the keys again and choose Quick Mission once more, and you'll be able to practice using any plane in the sim.

The world's most popular simulation finally gets some competition.



Player 1

is the server that brings the players together—before trying to bring them to their knees in a mad scramble for power.

Player 2

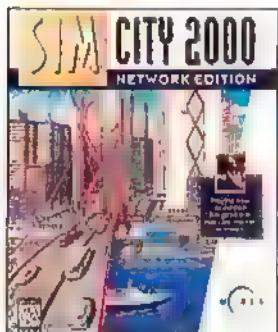
surveys the city looking for suggestions he can make to the group on how best to beautify their burgeoning burg.

Player 3

is in the midst of heated negotiations with Player 1 that could bring some much-needed revenue to her district.

Player 4

checks out the new stadium and power plant he shrewdly got approved at the city's last real-time town meeting.



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WARCRAFT II

Separating The Orcs From The Dorks In Multiplayer Melees

by Elliott Chin

The battle for Azeroth in Blizzard's *WARCRAFT II* offers some of the most fun and frantic multiplayer action this side of *COMMAND & CONQUER*.

As a multiplayer game, *WARCRAFT II*'s options are pretty hard to match. It supports up to eight players over a network and has four map sizes for different styles of play. There's a small map for quick battles, a medium-size map that allows a brief moment of exploration and build-up before a tumultuous showdown, and two larger maps that are big enough to allow ample exploration and army-building prior to an eight-way blood fest. Both the Orc and Human races are available to all eight players, and *WARCRAFT II* also allows gamers to form alliances and team up against friends.

With a seamless point-and-click interface, *WARCRAFT II* is an easy game for newcomers to digest. Strategy veterans, on the other hand, will be challenged by the variety of structures and units they can build, as well as the quick, real-time battles that demand thinking on the fly.

With over 70 missions between *WARCRAFT II* and the expansion disk, and an included scenario and unit editor, there is virtually no end to the variety and number of multiplayer maps you can play on in *WARCRAFT II*.

Blizzard, (800) 953-SNOW, www.blizzard.com

CONNECTING TO AZEROTH

WARCRAFT II matches can be waged over an IPX network. In this



GREAT BALLS OF FIRE To destroy those pesky towers right off the bat, bombard them with your catapults. Catapults longer range and higher accuracy make it easier to destroy the towers easily.



TOWER POWER A good strategy for disrupting your enemy in multiplayer and killing off his peasants is to erect several cannon towers near his most important gold mine.

setup, up to eight players can participate in a multiplayer match. The game also supports two-player, head-to-head play over a modem or a direct link with a null modem. In addition, you can play *WARCRAFT II* over the Internet using the application Kali, though fast connections are necessary for any reasonable performance. Multiplayer games of *WARCRAFT II* can be played in both DOS and Windows 95.

By far the best multiplayer feature of *WARCRAFT II* is the spawning technology. This unique technology allows up to three people to play per CD. Only the host needs to have the *WARCRAFT II* CD in the CD ROM drive, while the other two players can connect and play without one. For a six-way match, two CDs are needed, and an eight player match requires three.

GOLDEN MEANS

The key to winning is maintaining a steady income. Explore the map early. The minute you've spotted an extra gold mine, send a party of military units and a peon to the gold mine and have the peon build a town hall while the soldiers stand guard. At this early stage of the game, it is unlikely that your opponents will have claimed these extra gold mines, so it is essential that you get there first. Once the town hall has been built, recruit an additional peon, and then build a guard tower for immediate protection. This will double your income, giving you a sizable advantage in growth over your opponents.

One tactic for wreaking havoc on your opponents is building several towers near his primary gold mine. Send out three peons to your enemy's mine, and then have one begin construction of a tower while the other two "repair" it and speed its completion. Once the tower is built, immediately upgrade it to a cannon tower, and then build another one. If you're fast enough, you might get two towers up before he kills your insidious little workforce. The towers accomplish two things: First, they kill your opponent's peons, forcing him to waste gold recruiting extras. Second, they severely inhibit, or even cut off, his gold supply by making the route too dangerous to travel.

COMMAND & CONQUER

Giving Multiplayer Combat The NOD

by Elliott Chin and Jack Rodriguez

COMMAND & CONQUER nabbed the Premier Award for Best Strategy Game of the Year not only for its engaging real-time gameplay and high production values, but also for its immense success as a multiplayer game.

In multiplayer matches, COMMAND & CONQUER supports a maximum of four players. Unfortunately, the map sizes are fairly small, but between the original game and the mission disk, COVERT OPERATIONS, there are dozens of maps for multiplayer fans to choose from. Players can choose to be either the good GDI or evil NOD Brotherhood. One advantage C&C has over WARCRAFT II is the variety of army capabilities: The GDI has large, powerful units, while the NOD has fast, stealthy ones. These differences lead to necessarily different strategies, which will challenge even veteran strategy gamers.

You can also alter the parameters of multiplayer games, such as starting credits, the existence of computer opponents, the game's tech level (which dictates the types of troops you can build), and the distribution of crates around the map that hold money and special bonuses.

Virgin/Westwood, (800) 874-4607, www.westwood.com

CONNECTING TO COMBAT

COMMAND & CONQUER can be played over a network with the IPX protocol. In this case, up to four players can compete in one match. There is also support for head-to-head play over a modem or null modem. In modem games, C&C requires that both players have a 9600-bps or faster modem. For the best performance, CGW recommends playing C&C on a 486/100 or better system with at least 16 megs of RAM.

C&C is a DOS product. If you launch it from the Windows 95 desktop, it will take you to DOS mode, and you won't be able to access your other Windows applications. COMMAND & CONQUER FOR WINDOWS 95 should be available by this fall and will support TCP/IP play over the Internet.

CONQUERING THE COMPETITION

Harvesters are the weak link in every player's game. Therefore, guard your harvesters and don't let them stray too far beyond your defensible perimeter. Check up on your harvesters periodically to make sure they don't wander into enemy territory. Conversely, you want to hunt down your enemy's harvesters. On the NOD side, buglies and bikes are good for taking out enemy GDI harvesters, because they are fast enough for hit-and-run tactics and can flee if the enemy sends heavy tanks to defend the harvester. Destroying an enemy



► MORE IS BETTER Build at least one additional harvester so that you can double or triple your harvest rates and unit fastness.



► SALVAGING THE SITUATION When you're being harassed by guerilla attack, you can use the Salvage Order to remove enemy troops.

harvester cuts his income by half and requires that he waste money building another one. During that time, you will enjoy a two-to-one advantage in harvesting berium and building units.

Shortcuts and extra features available in C&C are detailed, not in the documentation, but in the README file. These keyboard shortcuts are convenient for managing your troops and issuing special instructions in single player mode, but they're essential for multiplayer games.

During a battle, at times the selected units bunch up, which leaves them vulnerable to certain weapons. You can scatter the bunched units by pressing the X key. If the situation becomes hopeless, you can resign from the game. In single player mode, you will abort the mission, however, in multiplayer mode, you go out with a bang-literally. To cause all your units to self-destruct, press the R key.



**Psychologists say inside every
18 to 35-year-old male, there lies
a potential psychotic killer.**

SID MEIER'S CIVNET

How I Learned To Love TCP/IP

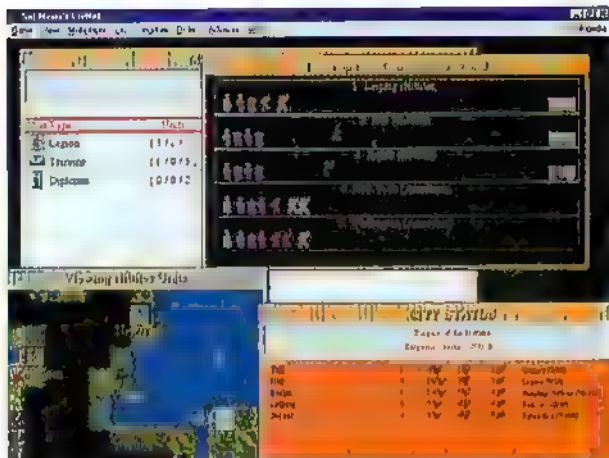
by Terry Coleman

Alexander the Great doth bestride the world like the Colossus his people have built in Athens, and the entire world trembles 'neath his military might. Today Alex (as he's known to his close friends) puts his suave demeanor and athletic good looks to good use as he addresses the United Nations, announcing that his government has made the difficult transition from despotism to democracy. Only in CIVILIZATION can your leader have a reign that spans millennia, and only in CivNet can you share that experience with other human leaders. (It appears the multiplayer hooks in CIVILIZATION II won't be taken advantage of, so don't expect a CivNet II any time soon.)

One of the reasons that CivNet works is that Sid Meier actually consulted on the design. The upside of this is that the game plays very like the original CIVILIZATION. What comes as less-than-welcome news is that everything looks dated, now that Civ II is conquering many a gamer's hard drive. Another problem is game balance: Humans can't benefit from the cheats that computer civilizations do, so falling behind early often means that you stay behind other human empires.

And then there are the infamous bugs. Whereas Civ II has benefited from gameplay patches, you don't need these enhancements to play the game. In CivNet, you either get the latest patch or you console yourself that you've bought a Windows version of solo CIVILIZATION because you aren't going to be playing for very long over a network.

Despite all this, the game works pretty well once the band-aids have been properly affixed. The parallel turn sequence is a boon for those



MULTITASKING MINIMALISM: While it might be tempting to open all the "Windows to your world" simultaneously, you're better off mainly from the city and strategic displays and avoiding lags.

who hate waiting for their opponents to move in turn-based games, and it helps add to the tension during play. It's a delight when you manage to build the Lighthouse under your enemy's nose, almost as much fun as following the nervous chat messages when you're the first to discover the military uses of gunpowder.

MicroProse, (800) 879-PLAY, www.microprose.com

CASTING YOUR CIVNET

You can get a decent multiplayer game going under IPX, but you are really better off using a TCP/IP connection—even in a network game. Since the action is turn-based rather than real-time, latency isn't as big an issue as it could be. Even so, you'll want to avoid Windows 3.1x; if you must play with Win 3.1, don't try to play with people who are using Win 95, unless teeth gnashing is one of your favorite hobbies. Similarly, we don't recommend that you mix and match very fast systems—say, P133s—with 486/33s and slower machines. It shouldn't make a difference, but it does, especially over a network.

When you install CivNet, make sure you let the program install the WinG drivers, even if you are convinced that you don't need them. And while it might seem obvious, don't try to multitask while you are playing a multiplayer game (although popping your favorite music CD in seems to work OK in Win 95 CivNet games).

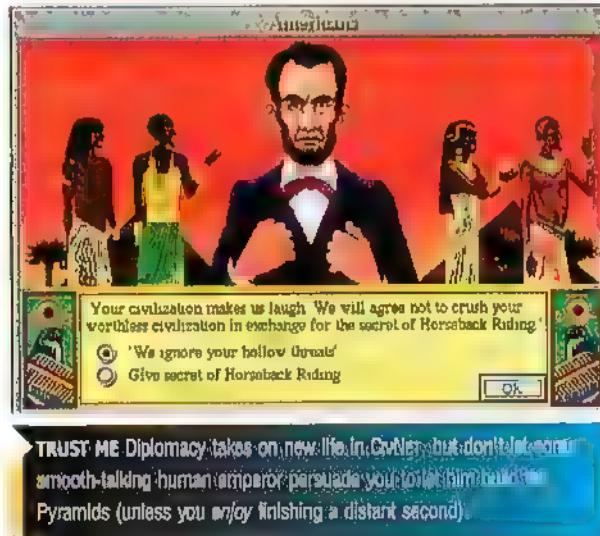
SNEAKY CIVPOLEYS

When you design a world, make a land bridge along the Antarctic coast connecting two larger continents, then research chariots and horseback riding.

Take a solemn oath with all other players not to build the Pyramids, and ruthlessly annihilate anyone who breaks the oath.

Make a "Trojan Horse" city of size 2 on your worst enemy's home continent. After he takes the city, retake it to capture technology, then run.

The mouse is nice, but using the keypad results in fewer squeaks of irritation caused by mismoving your units.



TRUST ME Diplomacy takes on new life in CivNet, but don't let your smooth-talking human emperor persuade you to claim the Pyramids (unless you *enjoy* finishing a distant second).

CAN HE



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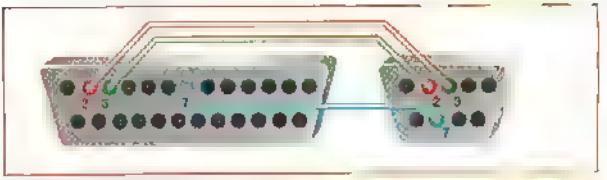
*CGW's Guide To
Creating Your Very
Own Game Net*

BY SHELDON LEEMON

Computer games are twice as much fun when you play with a friend, since human players are always a better match than a computer opponent—no matter how sophisticated the game's artificial intelligence (AI) routines are. Many multiplayer games also provide additional play options when a friend joins you. For example, you may both be able to play on the same side against the computer (or other human players), as well as against each other.

Most gamers like the idea of multiplayer gaming, but think the hardware is too complicated and expensive. To play a computer game with one or more friends, you need three things: a game with multiplayer support, two or more computers, and a way to connect the computers together. These days, it's not all that difficult to meet those requirements. Just about all newer titles have some sort of head-to-head play option, either over a direct serial connection or a network. Coming up with two or more computers also isn't as hard as you might think. You, or a friend, may already be a two-computer household, where the parents have recently bought themselves a new computer, and given the older machine to the kids (or vice versa). Or, you may have a friend who is willing to bring over a portable (or even a not-so-portable) computer to your house for a friendly (or not-so-friendly) round of gaming.

The last step, connecting the computers, is the one that throws most people. That's because when they hear the word *network*, they think of a local area network (LAN) maintained by large businesses—comprised of a huge server with dozens of workstations, and ruled by an all-powerful system administrator. Many LAN administrators have strict policies about gaming on the company network, with punishments ranging from a wrist-slap to summary execution. Most of their concern stems from problems with *Doom 1.0*'s network



► FIGURE 1 Wiring a null-modem cable.

functionality, which flooded networks with excessive traffic, causing clients to lose their connections, and bringing overall network performance to a crawl. That problem was quickly remedied, and networked games published since use very little network bandwidth, making administrators' concerns pretty much outdated. But old policies die hard, so using your company network may not be an option, even after hours, for networked gaming. Fortunately, setting up a game network is much simpler, requiring only a bare minimum of hardware and software and no special expertise. Here's a guide to getting a game net up and running, so you can bring multiplayer gaming home.

TWO CAN PLAY AS CHEAPLY AS ONE

The simplest and least expensive way to connect two computers for head-to-head play is a direct serial connection. All you have to do is to

Playing the latest strategy or action game against your friends is the current hot trend in games.

Selling up a local area network, however, can be an intimidating and frustrating task.

Stepping in to fill the void is Apexx Technology, with the GameLAN kit. GameLAN is a simple networking scheme that uses parallel port Ethernet adapters for network connections. We were at first skeptical, having had negative experiences with parallel port hardware in the past, but the GameLAN kits are easy to set up and specifically tuned for the needs of multi-player gaming.

The GameLAN kits come in two forms: a complete kit with two adapters, cabling and documentation, and an add-on kit with one adapter and cabling. The GameLAN dongle plugs into the parallel port; you need to disconnect your printer, as there is no pass-through capability. Connecting to other computers is a breeze—you use standard, 4-wire, RJ-11 telephone cord, and more than two computers are connected by a daisy chain system—no need to pop off the computer cover.

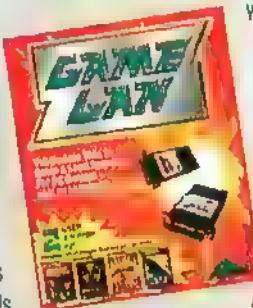
Installation works under either Windows 95 or Windows 3.11, and sets up DOS networking as well. The manual seemed a bit thin, but it completely described the setup options. In addition to

the basic GameLAN software, Apexx supplies a number of shareware games on CD.

We tested GameLAN under Windows 95 and DOS, picking a variety of games. All the supplied shareware games or demos—*Duke Nukem 3D*, *Doom*, *Heretic*, *HEXEN* and *WARCRAFT 2*—ran easily under DOS. It took a bit of configuring to get the package to work under Windows 95, but we attributed this to having to disable existing networking hardware first. We then ran *WARCRAFT 2* and *MechWarrior 2*'s *NetMech95* with good results.

One caveat: Power to the GameLAN adapter is through a keyboard pass-through that taps juice from the keyboard port—not all keyboard hardware can support this, so check your setup. Apexx offers an optional A/C adapter. The company recommends that no more than 12 systems be connected together; performance varies depending on the system.

GameLAN's low-cost, easy setup and relatively good performance makes it a great solution for occasional network games. Check it out by contacting Apexx Technology, PO



► PEER PRESSURE GameLAN uses daisy-chained, peer-to-peer network adapters. To add a new system to the line, just plug a GameLAN adapter into its parallel port, and run a cable to the last adapter in the chain.

Box 9291, Boise, ID 83702; (208) 336-9600.—Loyd Case

GameLAN 2 player kit: \$139.99

GameLAN 1 player add-on: \$69.99

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table design and super-real ball movement. Now with Loony Labyrinth™ they've taken that standard one step further. If you're looking for a game that will keep you challenged all year, take a step up and see what real pinball is all about. With a 90-day money back satisfaction guarantee, you've got little to lose.

Intelligent Gamer Online - "Loony Labyrinth is the most faithful, complex, and downright enjoyable reality based pinball game you can find on any computer platform or game console today." (Rating 92/100)

Computer Game Review - "This is still the best computer pinball game." (Rating 90/100)
Winner - Golden Triad Award.

MacUser - "Like all really great games, Loony Lab has a high just-one-more-try factor." (Rating 4.5/5)

Inside Mac Games - "...not only one of the best vid pins ever, but one of the greatest Macintosh games of all time." (Rating 4.5/5)



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BUILD YOUR OWN GAME NET

plug a special serial cable, called a null modem cable, into one of the serial ports on each computer. Since almost every computer already has a connector for a second serial port, the only hardware you'll need is the cable itself. You can buy a null modem cable (or a null modem adapter that fits on the end of a standard serial cable) at almost any computer store for less than \$20. Serial ports come with either 9-pin or 25-pin connectors, though so make sure that you get a cable with ends that can plug into both computers.

If your computers aren't located close together, you may find that a standard 6-foot or 10-foot null modem cable isn't long enough. FormGen sells a 30-foot head-to-head serial cable for about \$35, with both 9-pin and 25-pin connectors on each end. Or, if you're handy with a soldering iron, you can easily make the cable yourself. All you need is two female D-shell connectors (25 pin or 9-pin, depending on which connector your computer has) and some wire with at least three conductors (such as four conductor telephone wire). The Transmit (pin 2) and Receive (pin 3) lines should be crossed, so that pin 2 of one connector goes to pin 3 of the other. The Ground line (pin 7) goes straight across from one connector to the other (see Figure 1).

No special software is required for a direct serial connection, other than the game itself. Just run the game on both computers, and select the proper multiplayer option from the menu. Games like DUKE NUKEM 3D and Doom require you to run the Setup pro-



LAPTOP CONNECTORS: The PCMCIA NIC (left) is the least expensive means of connecting a laptop to a network. It plugs into a NIC card slot and accepts RJ-45 or 1-BNC connection. The Linksys PC card shown accepts both connections. If you happen to own a PC card slot, the parallel port connection is a better alternative, but it's much more expensive. The cable is designed for the parallel port and connects RJ-45 to RJ-45.

gram to launch a multiplayer game. Other games may have an option such as Serial Game, or Direct Connect right on their main menu. When you select this type of game, the program will probably ask you to check some settings, including the following, to make sure that the game can find your serial port.

► COM port: Normally you'll choose COM 1 for a laptop computer, and COM 2 for a desktop machine, which usually uses

Say What You Mean

Here's a brief glossary of networking terms you may encounter while setting up your game net:

10Base-T A network connection using UTP cable with RJ-45 connectors on each end.

10Base2 A network connection using coax cable with BNC connectors on each end.

BNC A cylindrical connector with a bayonet mount.

Coaxial cable (coax) A two-wire cable with an inner conductor, surrounded by a braided shield, separated by a layer of plastic.

Crossover cable A UTP cable in which a Transmit line on one end connects to a Receive line on the other. Used to connect two 10Base-T cards together directly, without going through a hub.

Ethernet Hardware standard used by most network cards. Ethernet cards come in two speeds, 10 megabits per second (Mbps), and 100 Mbps.

Hub A central device where each client machine, sometimes called a node, connects in a star-topology LAN. It acts as a traffic controller, routing information from one computer to another.

IEEE 802.2 or 802.3 Ethernet frame types, which describe how information is sent over Ethernet networks. Novell NetWare 3.X networks generally use 802.3, while Netware 4.X networks use 802.2.

IPX Internetwork Packet Exchange, the protocol used in Novell networks.

LAN Local area network.

NDIS Network Device Interface Specification. A device driver standard for Ethernet cards used by Microsoft networks, which allows multiple protected-mode network protocols to be used with the same card.

NE2000 An Ethernet network card made by Novell. Many 16-bit cards are NE2000-compatible.

NETBEUI NetBIOS Extended User Interface. The protocol used by Microsoft network operating systems (Windows for Workgroups, Windows 95 and Windows NT).

NetBIOS Protocol used by network operating systems such as LanTastic and some game titles.

NIC Network Interface card. An Ethernet NIC is usually an ISA card that plugs into your computer.

Null modem A serial cable that crosses the Receive and Transmit lines, allowing a direct connection between the serial ports of two computers.

ODI Open Datalink Interface: Novell's device driver standard for linking a network card to multiple protocols.

Peer-to-peer A network in which each workstation can share its hard drive and printer with any other.

Protocol An agreed-upon method for transmitting information. You can think of a protocol as the "language" a network speaks.

RJ-45 A connector that resembles a modular phone connector, but is larger.

Stack A series of driver programs used to implement a protocol.

Networks are built with layers of software, which insulate—or abstract—an application from the hardware.

Star-topology LAN A network in which each computer is connected via 10Base-T to a central hub. If any one station disconnects, all others remain connected.

TCP/IP Transport Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. Protocol used on most Unix networks and on the Internet.

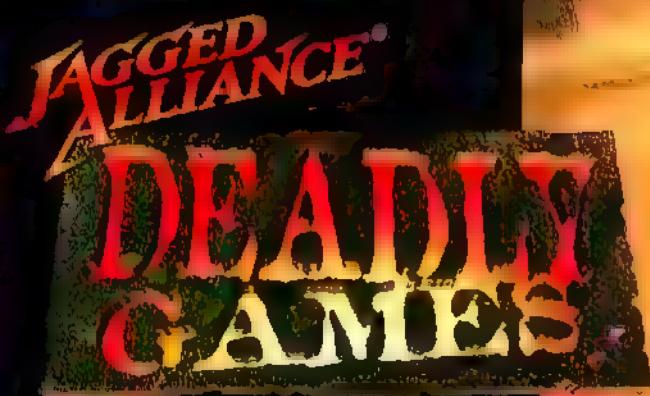
Terminator A 50 Ohm resistor pack that plugs into the T-connector on each end of a 10Base2 network. It prevents signals from being reflected back down the line, causing noise.

UTP Unshielded Twisted Pair. A type of cabling that uses separate conductors for Transmit and Receive, twisted around each other. Used in 10-Base-T networks with RJ-45 connectors.

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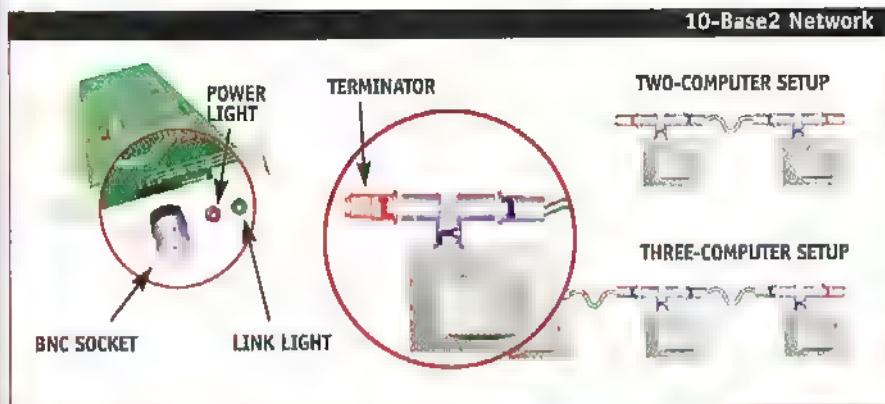


FIGURE 2: Using RG-58 cable and BNC connectors (also known as 10-Base2) you can daisy-chain multiple rigs together to form your own network. The illustration shows how to terminate a 10-Base2 network (inset).

COM 1 for the mouse. Desktop computers with internal modems, however, often have the modem set to COM2, and the external serial port disabled entirely. In this case, you'll need to remove your modem or change its settings before you can reenable your external COM 2 port. Unless you are fairly skilled at resolving IRQ conflicts, you may want to get help from an expert before you try turning your second COM port back on.

- **IRQ:** Unless you have changed the settings on your serial port hardware, use the defaults: IRQ 4 for COM 1, and IRQ 3 for COM 2.
- **Baud Rate:** Determines how fast you send information from one computer to the other. The right setting depends on the speed of

10-Base2 Network

A direct serial connection is a great way to get started with network games. It's cheap, works well with laptops, and long cable runs are no problem. Data transfer is slow, however, which may reduce the speed at which fast action games run, particularly on a slow computer. Also, direct serial connections are limited to two machines. And, in an amazingly clueless omission, Microsoft doesn't support direct serial connections in its DirectPlay multiplayer libraries for Windows 95-only modem and network connections.

To overcome these drawbacks, you have to step up to the next level of multiplayer gaming—a network connection.

WIRING UP A NETWORK

Setting up an Ethernet network requires more hardware and software than a direct serial connection, but the benefits far outweigh the time and money you'll invest. Data transfer across an Ethernet network is more than a hundred times faster, on average, than a serial connection (about 1 MB/sec), and you'll be able to connect as many computers as your games support.

The main ingredient you'll need is an Ethernet Network Interface Card (NIC). There are lots of different kinds of NICs available, but for purposes of network gaming, the least expensive 16-bit ISA card will work just as well as costlier cards. Look for cards that are compatible with Novell's NE2000, since most driver software supports such cards. You can find cards such as the MaxTech NX 16BT at a chain store like CompUSA or Computer City for about \$40. You may also be able to find a used card at a computer show or swap meet for as little as \$10. If you have a laptop, though, be prepared to pay a lot more. Typically, laptops require a PC Card or parallel port Ethernet adapter, costing anywhere from \$129 to \$259.

Inexpensive NICs come with one or both of two kinds of connectors. BNC connectors are used with RG-58 coaxial cable, a thinner version of the stuff that carries your cable TV signal. This kind of connection is known variously as BNC, RG 58, Thin Ethernet, ThinNet, 10Base2, or CheaperNet. Multiple computers can be easily daisy-chained using BNC T connectors and terminators. The other type of connector is an RJ-45

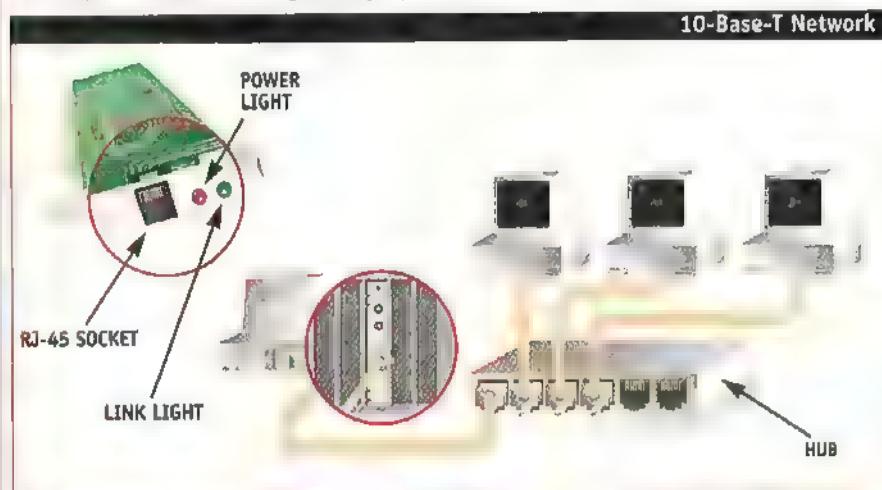


FIGURE 3: A 10-Base-T network is another option if you want to have a hub. This diagram shows how chaining is done. You won't need to use BNC connectors on the hub itself, but you will need them to connect to a network interface card (NIC). The connection has in fact been made with another system.

your computer and its serial port. The key thing to remember is that both computers must choose the same baud rate. If you have a sluggish computer hooked up to a real screamer, set both to a speed that the slowpoke can handle. When in doubt, start at 9600 bps, and then increase the speed in subsequent sessions to see if both machines can handle it.

IN THE FUTURE, THE SPORTS PAGE HAS AN OBITUARY SECTION

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socket, and looks like a giant version of an RJ-11 modular telephone phone socket. RJ-45 connectors are usually attached to a type of cable called Unshielded Twisted Pair (UTP), and this cabling arrangement is known as RJ-45, UTP, or 10Base-T. If you want to network more than two computers using RJ-45, you'll need to connect each card to a hub, also called a concentrator, which routes signals

between all units connected to it. Hubs can cost between \$90 and \$150. This extra expense doesn't add any functionality, so it probably makes more sense to stick to Ethernet cards with a BNC connector. Hubs do have an advantage in that adding new clients requires only that the new rig have a NIC, and a piece of UTP with RJ-45 connectors. Some NICs have both RJ-45 and BNC connectors, though most have one or the other.

Hardware needed for your DOS Ethernet network includes an Ethernet card (with a BNC connector) for each computer, one fewer BNC cables than the number of computers, BNC T-connectors for each card, and one set of 50 Ohm BNC terminators. You should be able to find all these items at any well-stocked computer store. Once you've rounded up them up, plug an Ethernet card into each computer and connect the machines together with coax. Plug a T-connector into each card, and run a coax cable from each side of the T-connector to the next computer on either side. After you've connected all the computers together, place a terminator plug on the open side of the T-connector on the two end machines (see Figure 2).

You'll have to set the I/O port address and IRQ

Net Resources On The Internet

Here's a quick guide to find information on the Internet from companies that market networking products.

Company	Product	URL
3Com	Network hardware	www.3com.com
Apex Technologies	GameLAN network kit	www.apextech.com
Asante	Network hardware	www.asante.com
Linksys	Network hardware	www.linksys.com
MarcTech	Network kits for gamers	www.martech.com
Novell	NetWare networking software	www.novell.com

These pages contain additional information on setting up game networks.

IPX PC LAN Gaming FAQ	www.comcast.com/~ansinn/lan4gamers.html
Linksys's guide to network setup	www.linksys.com/escape/howmain.htm
Multiplayer Games & Simulations Resources	www.teleport.com/~causis/doomgate.gamers.org/docs/FAQ/doomlag/sec1.html#B
Selling up Doom on a network	www.science.uwaterloo.ca/~kpark/info/compl/win95px.html
Using IPX with Win 95's dialup networking	



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for each Ethernet board. Newer boards let you tweak these settings from software. The default settings for many boards are IRQ 3 (which conflicts with COM 2) and a port address of 300 (which may conflict with wavetable sound cards). Before changing these settings, you should determine which port addresses and IRQs are free. In particular, check what IRQs your sound card, internal modem, and mouse use. If you're running Windows 95, you can use the System Properties window to help determine which IRQs are in use. Usually, IRQ 10, 11, or 12 is free. Clicking the Input/Output radio button will give you a list of I/O port addresses in use. Once you've determined which IRQ and I/O addresses are free, go into DOS mode and run the board's configuration program. After you've set the IRQ and I/O addresses, the configuration program may allow you to test your hardware connection by actually sending data packets from one computer to the other. Once you're able to send packets, you're through with the hardware part of the job.

ADD DRIVERS TO TASTE

The next step is to set up and load the network drivers. Most computer games require network drivers that are compatible with Novell NetWare, currently the most popular network operating system. Novell's main protocol for sending information down the wire is called Internetwork Packet Exchange (IPX). If you look at the requirements listed on the package, you'll see that most games require an "IPX network" for multiplayer mode. The good news is that you don't have to install a complete Novell network, replete with file server, network file system, mail and all the rest. All you really need for gaming purposes are three small network driver programs, known as an IPX protocol stack and consisting of:

- ▶ LSL.COM: The Link Support Layer.
- ▶ NE2000.COM: The ODI (Open Data Link Interface) driver for your Ethernet card (The name may be different, depending on your card. The Maxtech NIC, for example, uses a driver called NIC2000.COM or NWMLID.COM.)
- ▶ IPXODI.COM: The ODI implementation of Novell's IPX protocol.

The ODI driver file for your Ethernet card can be found on its installation disk, and you may find the other two drivers there as well. If not, you can download them in a file called VLMUP4.EXE on Novell's Web site (<http://ftp.novell.com>). Before you can load these drivers, you need to create a text file called NET.CFG, which provides some setup information. A sample NET.CFG file looks like this.

LINK DRIVER NE2000	:The IRQ and PORT info will be used by NE2000.COM
FRAME ETHERNET_802.3	,Common protocol all players use
INT 12	Card Interrupt
PORT 300	,Card ID Address

Change this file to reflect your own setup. If your card uses a driver called NWMLID.COM, for example, replace the NE2000 entry with NWMLID. Be sure to place this file in the same directory as the driver programs.

Before you start your game in multiplayer mode, you must load all three of these drivers, in the exact order listed above. Suppose, for

example, that your network driver files live in a directory called C:\NET and Duke Nukem 3D's game files are in C:\DUKE3D. A DOS batch file to load the drivers and launch the network version of the game would look like this:

NETDUKE.BAT

```
REM Load network drivers
C:
CD\NET
LH LSL
REM LH loads the drivers into high memory, saving precious low memory
LH NE2000
REM Driver for your NIC (yours may be NIC2000, NRODI, etc)
LH IPXODI
REM Launch Duke's setup program to begin net game.
CD \DUKE3D
SETUP
REM Jnload network drivers from memory
IPXODI /U
NIC2000 /U
LSL /U
CD\
```

Once you've used this batch file to load the network drivers and the program, select NETWORK GAME from the menu. You'll see a number of settings that you can change, including:

- ▶ Player Name: Select the name you'll use in the game.
- ▶ Number of Players: Every machine should show the total number of players connected.
- ▶ Network Socket Number: This number allows you to play the game on a network that has other traffic on it. Any four-digit number will do, as long as each machine uses the same number.

How Many Copies Do You Need?

A common question about multiplayer games is how many copies of the software are required for network play. From a technical standpoint, the full game software should be installed on every computer on the network. From a legal standpoint, the general rule is that you are required to buy one copy of the game for each rig on the network. This is true even when you can install the full game from the CD and play without having the disc in the drive. In some cases however, game manufacturers grant a more liberal license. WARCRAFT II only requires one CD for every three players, and both COMMAND AND CONQUER and WEREWOLF vs. COMMANDER come with two CDs, requiring only one game purchase for every two players. Games that require you to have the CD in the drive when you play them, however, almost always require a separate copy for each player. So before buying a multiplayer game, check with the manufacturer to see how many copies you'll need to play legally on your game network.

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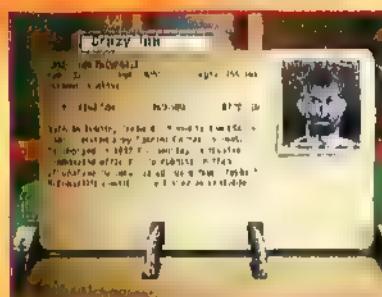
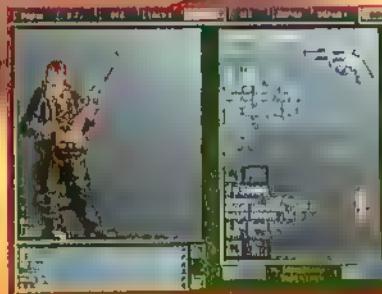
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In most multiplayer games, the first player selects Create Game from the menu, and that player gets to select game options such as scenario, level, whether computer opponents will also play, etc. The other players select Join Game. When everyone has joined, the game starts, and you're ready to rock!

The basic setup described here includes just enough network soft-

ware to play network games. If you want to use the network to send files from one computer to the other at hard drive speeds, you can use a fast, handy shareware program from Jackson Software called IPXFER. You can find this software, along with a complete shareware DOS network called PowerLAN, on Nick Kingham's IPX Networking Web page (<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~nktingham/ipx.html>).

Upon opening the Network Control Panel window (left), click Add to open the Select Network Component Type dialog box (right).

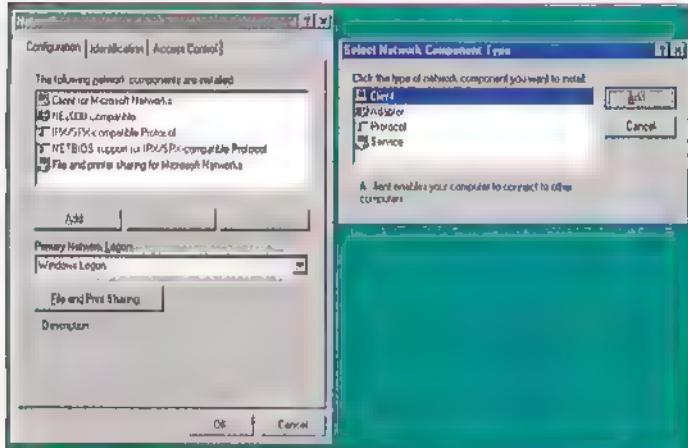


FIGURE 4 Using the Network Control Panel (left) to add network components (right). Why do you think the 'Client' entry is selected in the left panel?

ware to play network games. If you want to use the network to send files from one computer to the other at hard drive speeds, you can use a fast, handy shareware program from Jackson Software called IPXFER. You can find this software, along with a complete shareware DOS network called PowerLAN, on Nick Kingham's IPX Networking Web page (<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~nktingham/ipx.html>).

OH YEAH, THAT OTHER OPERATING SYSTEM...

Once you've set up a simple DOS game network, why stop there? If you're running Windows 95, you already own a complete network operating system. All you need to do is configure the software for your network hardware. Once you've set up your peer-to-peer Win 95

network, you'll be able to run IPX network games in a Virtual DOS Machine (VDM) window, without loading DOS IPX drivers. You'll also be able to run native Windows 95 networked games, like MechWarrior 2, and DirectPlay-aware games, when they begin shipping. Most importantly, however, you'll be able to use the Windows Explorer to move entire directories from one computer to the other with drag-and-drop ease.

You can get through most of your configuration chores by clicking on the Network icon in the Control Panel. The Configuration tab of the Network window shows what network components are installed. If the NIC you installed is a Plug-and-Play device, Windows 95 may automatically detect it on startup. If not, you'll have to add a NIC driver manually, which is a pretty painless task.

Upon opening the Network Control Panel, you may find the list empty. By clicking on the Add button, however, you can add four types of network components: Client, Adapter, Protocol and Service. You'll want to add one of each. For Client, choose Microsoft as the vendor, and Client for Microsoft Networks. For Adapter, either select Have Disk, to load a driver for your Ethernet card from the installation disk, or if you have an NE2000 compatible card, select Novell/Anthem as the vendor, and NE2000 Compatible. For Protocol, select Microsoft as the vendor, and IPX/SPX Compatible Protocol. For Services, select

Microsoft as the vendor, and File and printer sharing for Microsoft Networks.

After you've installed these four components, you'll need to adjust some settings. Select the Adapter entry for your Ethernet card, and click the Properties button. On the Resources tab of this window, you'll be able to select the IRQ and Port settings. Make sure that these settings match the ones you used when you configured the card from DOS. Next, select the entry for the IPX/SPX protocol, and click on Properties. On the NetBIOS tab, enable NetBIOS over IPX/SPX. NetBIOS is another network protocol, used by some networked games. Under Windows 95, you can enable multiple protocols on one card at the same time. If you have games that use Microsoft's NET-BEUI protocol, or the TCP/IP protocol used on the Internet, you can enable these as well. (We'll have more on configuring TCP/IP next month in our online gaming feature.)

Finally, you should make some changes on the main network configuration window itself. Under Primary Network Logon, select Windows Logon. That way, you won't have to enter a password when you start your computer. If you want to be able to share your printers or disk drives with another machine, click on the File and Printer Sharing button, and select the appropriate check boxes. On the Identification tab, enter a name for your computer and for the workgroup. Each computer on the network should have a unique name, and all computers should have the same workgroup name. On the Access Control tab, check Share-level access control, which allows you to set up sharing from each computer, instead of from a central server. Once you've made these changes, click OK to

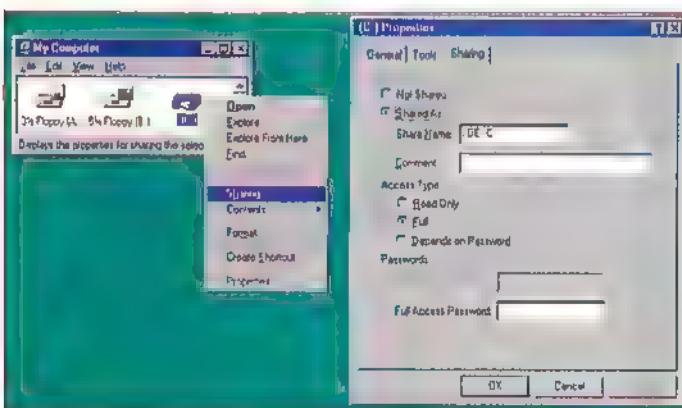


FIGURE 5 To share a drive, right-click the icon and choose Properties. This allows you to set the drive sharing and security.

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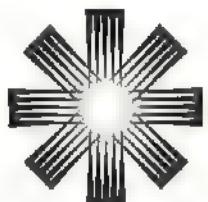
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exit the Network Control Panel. You'll be prompted to insert the Windows 95 Installation CD, your NIC installation disk, or both, to install the necessary drivers. When you've completed installing the drivers, you'll be prompted to restart your machine so the new settings can take effect.

Once you've set up the software on all the computers and restarted them all, the names of the various peer machines appear when you click on the Network Neighborhood icon. You won't see any resources on these machines yet, because you haven't set up any drives for sharing. To enable sharing, open up the My Computer window, and right click on the icon of any drive you want to share. Select the Sharing item from the menu, and you'll see a Sharing properties tab (see Figure 5).

Click on the Shared As button, and enter a name in the Share Name box (like "C_Drive" or "CD-ROM"). You can also select an access type: Read Only, where others can read files, but not delete or change important system files, Full, where others can read and write, or Depends on Password, where you can enter one password for Read-Only access and another for Full access. Once you've shared a drive, its icon will change to include an outstretched hand, and the drive will now appear when you click on your computer in the Network Neighborhood window or on its entry in the Explorer window.

You can follow the same procedure to share CD ROM drives and printers. Once you've set up sharing on all of your computers, you can access network drives from your programs just as you access local drives. And you can use the Explorer window to drag files or directories from one computer to the other.

If you've set up your Windows 95 network using Microsoft's IPX/SPX compatible protocol, you'll be able to play network games from a DOS window without loading IPX driver software first. This will only work if all rigs are running Windows 95. If some machines are using a DOS IPX protocol stack, they probably won't be able to communicate with the Windows 95 machines. In that case, you should reboot all the Windows 95 machines to DOS and run the same IPX driver stack on all computers. Another case where you may want to reboot to DOS is if you find your games running slower under Windows 95. Another very compelling reason to set up Windows 95's networking functionality is so you can play networked Windows 95-native games, many of which will soon be using Microsoft's DirectPlay Application Programming Interface (API), the networking part of the DirectX API family.

END THE DAY WITH NETWORK PLAY

Computer gaming takes on a whole new dimension when you can pummel your friends, instead of some cybernetic slow learner. Setting up a game network can make you the most popular gamer on your block. Best of all, it's a lot easier and cheaper to set up a game network than you think. Hardware for a complete four-computer Ethernet setup four Ethernet cards, four T-connectors, three cables and two terminators—costs little more than four computer games, about \$225. And the complete setup process shouldn't take more than a couple of hours or so. Once you've discovered how easy, fun and inexpensive network gaming is, you may wonder why you didn't set up a game net a long time ago. ☺

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**"SEE YOU NEXT
WEEK, SUCKER!"**

"OH, #S@!+."



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Look Ma, No LANs!

How To Play Multiplayer Games Over The Internet With Kali



etwork gaming is one of the biggest technological developments of 1996. This issue, CGW explains how to set up a local area network (LAN) so you can take advantage of the increasing number of network-playable games. But setting up a network in your house is a complex endeavor. You need cables, network cards, multiple computers in one place and an understanding of how to get everything to work.

If that sounds insurmountable, you should know that you can play most of the same multiplayer games via the Internet. You don't need a service like DWANCO or TEN to get a good game of WARCRFT II or COMMAND & CONQUER going between you and your far-flung friends. The majority of multi-

player games use the IPX networking protocol (a protocol is the low-level description of how the data is broken apart, transmitted over the wire and reconstructed at the other end). Popularized by Novell, IPX is a very common protocol supported by almost every PC networking card available. IPX is nice because it's relatively easy to configure by users—no worries about what your computer's address is or other arcane data. It's also mostly used on LANs, rather than the big, wide-area networks such as the Internet. The Internet uses a completely different protocol, known as TCP/IP (Transport Control Protocol/Internet Protocol), taken from the Unix world.

Let's take a closer look at the Internet, which is fast becoming the de facto method for communicating over a wide area. It's also dirt cheap these days, with a variety of large and small companies offering Internet connections with unlimited connect time for a scant 20 bucks a month (less in some cases).



ANYBODY OUT THERE?

At first blush, it seems that the Internet would be an ideal environment for multiplayer gaming—except that most multiplayer games use IPX to communicate with other computers, not TCP/IP. Into this gap stepped Jay Cotton, who wrote the original version of Kali, which ran under good old MS-DOS. But Kali wasn't an ideal solution, because you had to be able to connect to your Internet account over DOS—no mean task—and then configure Kali to talk to your DOS TCP/IP software. Although a lot of people, through sweat and swearing, managed to get the DOS version of Kali working, it wasn't a task for the faint-hearted.

I was able to use Kali95 to find a NETMECH game, launch NETMECH and find an active game—all with a few mouse clicks.

Scitech Display Doctor: UniVBE, from Scitech Software, has become something of a de facto standard in the game business for configuring SVGA graphics for a host of different graphics cards. Scitech Software, the creators of UniVBE, has renamed the product Scitech Display Doctor and released a new version, 5.2.

Version 5.2 has some interesting features. It supports the VESA accelerator standards (only with ATI Mach64 cards currently), enabling some acceleration capability. It also supports the VESA 2.0 linear frame buffer mode, which allows much faster access to

graphics memory. Scitech has added support for a large number of new cards, including the Diamond Edge and the upcoming 3D Blaster PCI, based on the Rendition Verité chip. Both of these accelerators are pretty slow DOS performers (although the 3D Blaster is very quick at DOS SVGA resolutions); Display Doctor now makes these much more respectable performers in the DOS arena. Display Doctor was on last month's CGW demo disc, but you can also download it from the Scitech forum on CompuServe (GO SCITECH) or from their Web site, <http://www.scitechsoft.com>.

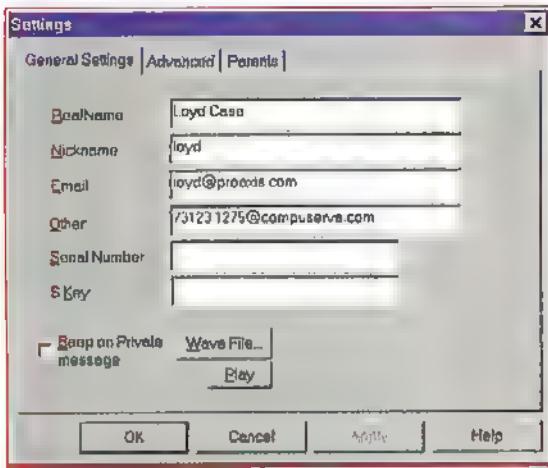


FIGURE 1 It's easy to configure Kali under Windows 95

So what do Kali and Kali95 actually do? Simple: *Kali makes your Internet connection appear to be an IPX connection to your game*. This means that all those IPX games can now be played with a number of other users over the Internet. This is pretty heady stuff, but still not the most profound part of Kali. (Bear with me, I'll get to that soon.)

Graphical environments, such as Windows 95 and OS/2, however, make networking much easier. Most configuration is done with dialog boxes and pop-up menus. So a graphical version of Kali was written—Kali95. (Despite its name, Kali95 also runs under OS/2—but not Windows

NT currently).

The current version of Kali95 is labeled 0.9, and is “pre-beta”—but when I ran it under Windows 95, it was very stable. And it’s radically different than Kali for DOS. Perhaps the single most important feature of Kali95 is how you connect. Let’s explore a typical Kali95 session.

The first thing you do is configure Kali95 as shown in Figure 1.

Kali95 is shareware, but will only run for 15 minutes at a time unless you buy a license (a measly 20 bucks, and well worth it). You give the Kali folks your credit card number, and they e-mail a serial number and S Key back to you. Enter your name, e-mail account, the serial number and S number into the appropriate boxes, click on OK and Kali95 is configured. Since Kali connects to your standard Internet account, that’s all you need to do to set it up. Of course, you may want to launch your network-playable games with one click, so

Kali95 (Figure 3).

Note that Kali95 works quite well with DOS games, not just Windows 95 games. I was able to get Blizzard’s Warcraft 2 and Activision’s DOS NetMach running under Kali95 without a hitch.

NETTECH PROFUNDITY

Now let’s get to the profound part. I pull down the Server menu and click on Connect, which gives me a screen that looks like Figure 4.

This screen is the heart and soul of

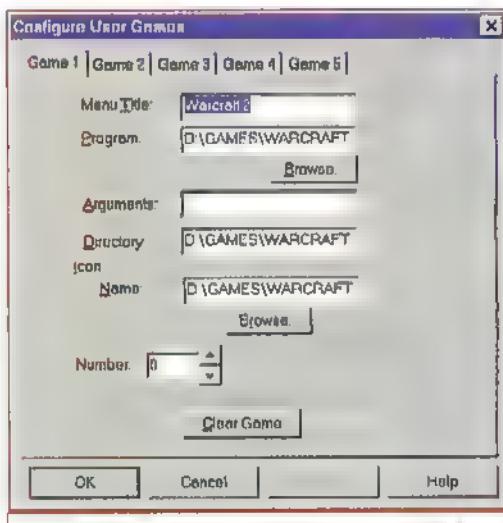


FIGURE 2 You can have up to five games automatically configured to run under the Kali95 menu

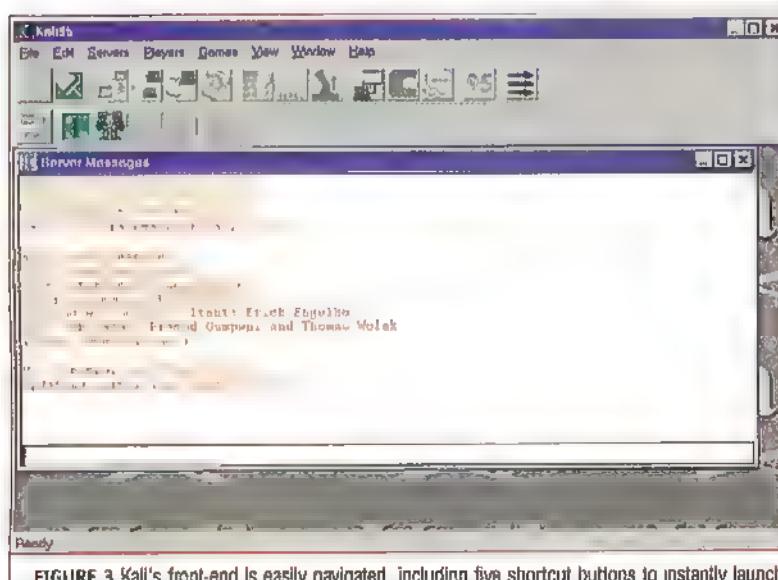


FIGURE 3 Kali's front-end is easily navigated, including five shortcut buttons to instantly launch network games.

Kali95 has a game configuration screen like the one in Figure 2. You can have up to five games automatically configured to run under the Kali95 menu.

The next step is to connect to your Internet provider. There are a number of ways to do this, but the easiest by far is through the Windows 95 dial-up connection. At any rate, once you are connected to your Internet service provider, you then run

Kali95 and represent the future of network gaming. It’s not the fact that it’s Kali that’s important, or even the protocol that matters. It’s how the user finds the game. All you do is click on a server name (the Kali server list is periodically uploaded to your Kali setup) and click OK to connect. Better yet, let’s say you’re itching to climb in a battlemech and find a NetMach session. You run down the server list, click on a server name and then click on the button Query Games. Up pops up a list in the main Kali95 window that looks something like Figure 5.

Now you can see how many players are on that server, what games are active and the IP addresses. You can pop up a chat window and try to communicate with one of the players to see if you can join the game—or you can simply launch

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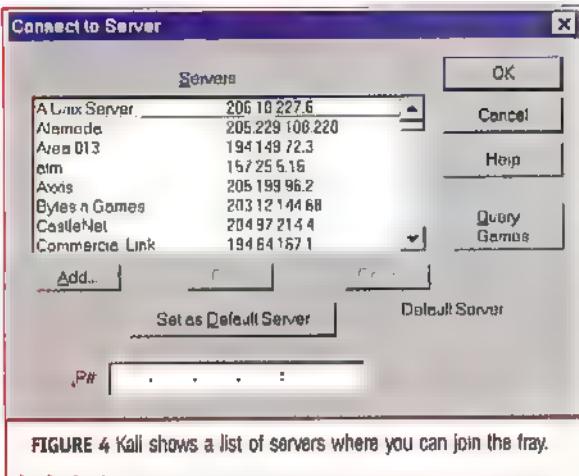


FIGURE 4 Kali shows a list of servers where you can join the fray.

the game and try to join. (By the way, a 28.8 Kbps modem or faster is a must for good response time.) Since

NetMIRC has a nice shell to set up games, I was able to use Kali95 to find a NetMIRC game, launch NetMIRC and find an active game—all with a few mouse clicks. It was one of the most profound gaming experiences I've had in a long time.

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

OK, now what if you want to simply play some network games with your buddies, and not worry about other strangers popping into your game? Easy—Kali95 has a server mode. All you need to do is communicate your IP address to the other players in the game, put Kali into server mode, and now your friends can link up with your

game through their versions of Kali95.

In many ways Kali and Kali95 represent the egalitarian spirit so common over the Internet. There are dozens of Kali servers around the world. Many Kali servers are being implemented as an adjunct service by Internet service providers (ISPs), and are free (except for the standard ISP monthly fee, of course). And with Kali95, Kali has become incredibly easy to use.

A number of companies are sprouting up as paid services to host network games—companies like the Total Entertainment Network,

Dwango and so on. But with Kali95, all you need is an Internet connection—so the paid services will have to offer some significant added value. It's much like the situation that CompuServe and America Online now find themselves in with regard to the Internet. It'll be interesting to see which of these online gaming services will be left standing after the initial shakeout, especially with a powerful, readily available network gaming tool like Kali out there.

How do you get Kali95? You get it by downloading it off the Internet, of course. The official Kali home page is <http://www.zaxis.com/kali/getkali.html>. Be sure to send in your \$20, and I'll see you on the Net. ♦

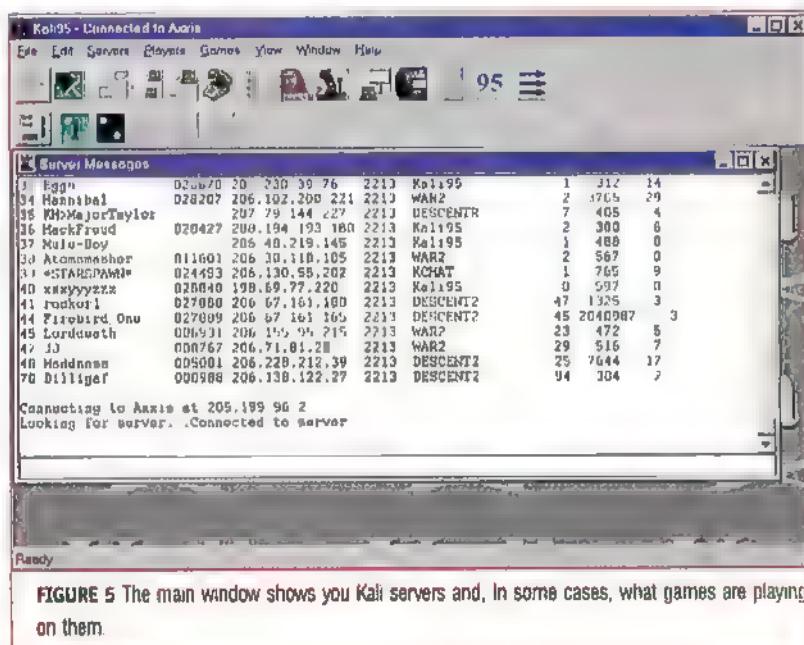


FIGURE 5 The main window shows you Kali servers and, in some cases, what games are playing on them.



► **High-Res for London with an ATI Mach 64 Card:** The ATI Mach 64 graphics cards (Xpression, Pro Turbo and

others) do not support the VESA 2.0 SVGA graphics standards. However, if you use Univibe 5.1a or 5.2, you may still not see 640x480 as an option. The key is to run Univibe with the -r option (i.e., -UNVIBE -r). This disables low-res modes for Univibe so you can run London at 640x480—better have a really fast Pentium, though.

► **High-Res Quake:** The shareware release of Quake has some odd features, like the arcane console mode I used to set up cer-

tain game commands. To enable any resolution higher than the default 320x200, you need to run the console. (Press the tilde key (~) while in the game, or press Esc, then choose Options, then Console from the menu.) Type "VID_DESCRIBEMODES" at the Console prompt. This will give you a list of the supported graphics modes. All systems should support modes 1 through 10 (320x200 up to 360x480). However, you'll need native VESA 2.0 support for your graphics card or an external driver (such as Univibe) to run at high resolutions.

Once you know which mode you'll be running the game in, you can type VID MODE <mode number> or put the command in Quake's configuration file (which is in the .Q1 directory).

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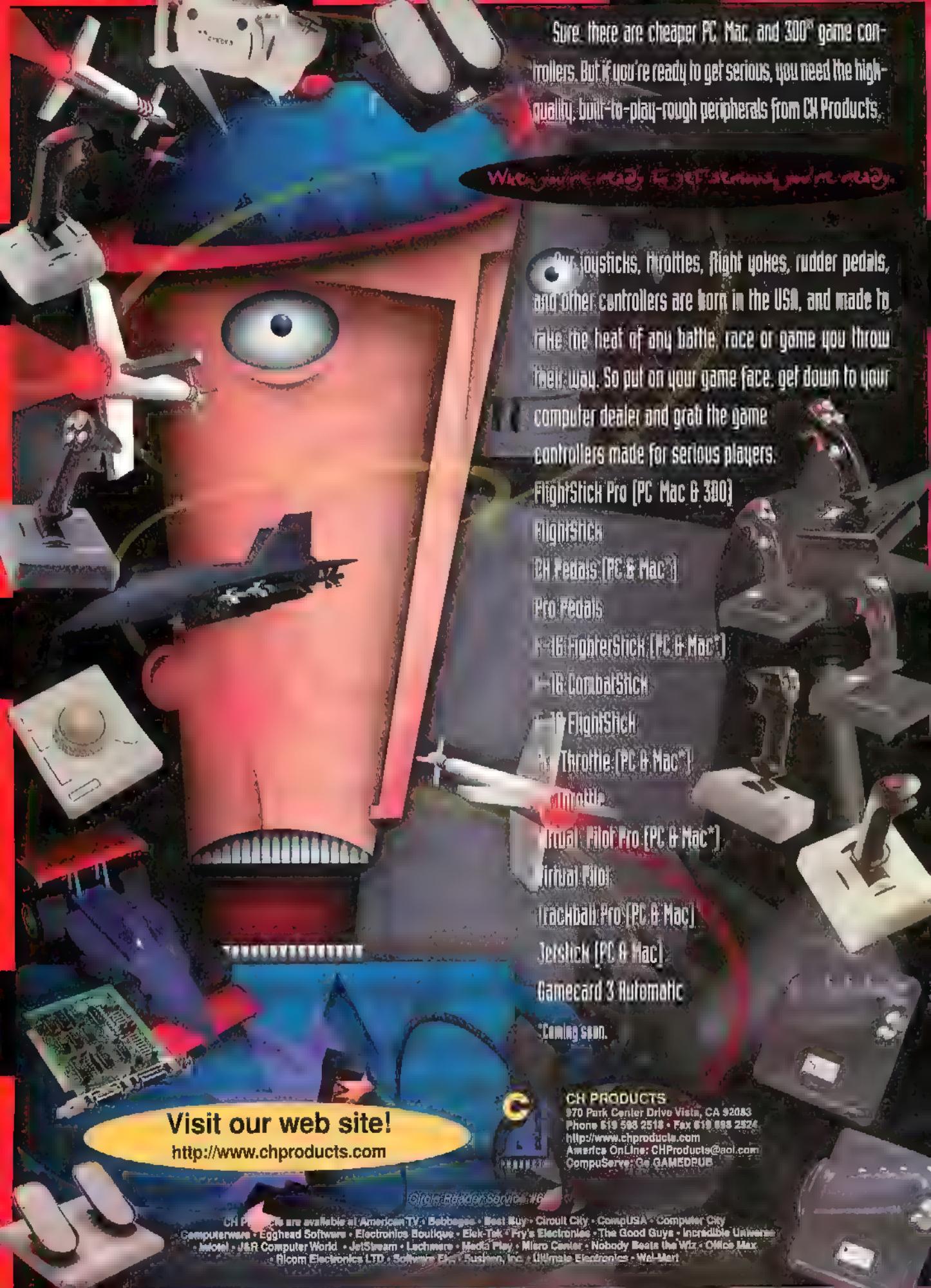
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Looks To Kill

The First Rendition-Based 3D Accelerator Packs Some Power

by Dave Salvator

We got a sneak peek at Creative Labs' PCI 3D Blaster in development, and though some rough edges remained, we were encouraged by what we saw. The 3D Blaster is the first

graphics accelerator to incorporate the Rendition Verite chip, which may prove to be this year's hottest all-in-one 2D/3D, Windows/DOS accelerator chip.

The PCI 3D Blaster will ship with a relatively healthy 4 MB of EDO DRAM. Curiously, Creative has decided not to ship a 2 MB version of the board, opting instead for the greater texture storage and onboard Z-buffering 4 MB allows.

Creative plans to ship the product by mid-September, though no pricing information was available at press time. Given that 3D board vendors are aiming for the \$150-\$250 sweet-spot, and given Creative's very aggressive pricing on their other graphics boards, we guesstimate the price will be somewhere around \$250-\$275.

While the exact software bundle had not yet been determined, it will include accelerated versions of REBEL MOON, and BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN. We were able to see TOSHINDEN, and it looked

much better than the unaccelerated PC version, with a smoother overall frame rate. Both titles were ported to Creative Labs' Creative Graphics Library (CGL), a 3D-rendering application programming interface (API) that Creative developed before Microsoft announced their Direct3D API. Despite Direct3D's arrival, Creative plans to support CGL on all

future versions of 3D Blaster. PCI 3D Blaster will be Direct3D and DirectDraw compatible, and will also run titles written to Rendition's Speedy-3D API.

We saw a Rendition-accelerated version of id's Q3EST some months ago, and were impressed by the extra scene detail the Rendition chip delivered. id will most likely deliver a hardware-accelerated version of QUAKE for the Rendition chip first, and Creative's PCI 3D Blaster will be able to run this enhanced version.

IT'S THE GAMES, STUPID

Of the games that Creative had up and running on this work in progress, the most impressive was Looking Glass's FLIGHT UNLIMITED, written to CGL for the VLB version of 3D Blaster. Though FLIGHT UNLIMITED looked less than stellar on the VLB version, it looked very good running on PCI 3D Blaster with all rendering features enabled at a frame size

Interplay's VR SOCCER. While the game has its own limitations (see our review last issue), the overall rendering quality was much improved, with the field smoothed by Blaster's bilinear filtering and the frame rate remaining consistently smooth.

In the Direct3D arena, again Blaster looked good coming out of the gate. Microsoft's MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS and FLIGHT UNLIMITED both ran very well. As the screen shots here show, the 3D Blaster smoothes the "blocky" effect with its bilinear filtering, and the trucks don't get "warped" thanks to perspective correction.

Because Blaster is VESA 2.0 compatible out of the box, we ran DURE: NUKEM 3D at 800x600 sans the UniVBI driver normally needed to run in this mode. Here again, the frame rate stayed quick and responsive, even when several monsters came into view.

There was a crush or two, but again we



PRODUCT STILL IN DEVELOPMENT



TAKE THE 3D CHALLENGE The accelerated version of MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS (right) shows how the PCI 3D Blaster smooths textures and corrects image perspective. The Blaster's acceleration also keeps the frame rate fast and fluid.

of 640x400. What was particularly striking was the ground detail. No, not crashing into it, but its level of detail and lack of warping thanks to the 3D Blaster's perspective correction. Also gone was the "ratcheting" effect that sometimes occurs when the frame rate goes south.

Another CGL-based title we saw was ACTIASOCCER, the European version of

we're seeing it work in progress. All told, what we saw looked very encouraging, and what's more encouraging is that Direct3D's arrival means many more 3D titles in the works that should boogie on the Blaster. When all the parts are in place, we'll give the 3D Blaster a full shakedown and let you know what we find. Stay tuned. **S**

Digital Synchronicity

Exploring The First-Person Multiplayer Experience



first-person action game just isn't worth its salt today if it can't handle the nuances of multiplay. Just a few years ago, when multiple-player capabilities were introduced into the venerable DOOM, they were considered esoteric. But then the floodgates opened. Since then countless games have surfaced that allow play between 2 to 16 players.

In all honesty, though, the percentage of players who participate in network gaming is still fairly low. The lion's share of

gamers still go mano-a-mano with a buddy via Ma Bell and a trusty modem. LAN play has been limited to the corporate sector (after hours or during those long, luscious days when the boss is away) or the college realm. Day by day, though, that is changing. More and more of us are plugging in, via our modems, to the Internet, and we've discovered that a network of networks permits some tremendous play opportunities.

THE FOUNDATION OF QUAKE

When QUAKE was in its infancy, the word *multiplayer* was already part of its design bedrock. Several years ago, when CGW paid a visit to id Software, there was much talk about how QUAKE would take advantage of the Internet. Reality forced id to scale back many of their initial aspirations (such as allowing you to FTP from within the game or allowing you to join a game regardless of whether it was on a local computer or a server 6,000 miles away), but multiplayer capability survived.

Players can work together to solve the levels, or they can simply go nailgun to nailgun in a race to create the largest pile of severed heads. Not surprisingly (a testament to our beastly heritage, no doubt), most of us prefer



DEATHMATCH MAN If you haven't played multiplayer, you haven't played QUAKE, says id's networking programmer John Cash



the more aggressive, less cooperative form of mayhem.

John Cash joined id to craft the multiplayer and networking portions of the QUAKE code. When he began work on the game, the design was still rough—no platforms, doors or weapons. "There was not much meat to speak of at that time," reflects Cash, "just a 3-D world and a player made out of a couple of cubes."

"Personally, I think that people haven't played QUAKE until they've tried multiplayer," Cash says. "The monsters are pretty tough, but they just can't compare to a live opponent. People make it so much more fun because they are so unpredictable."

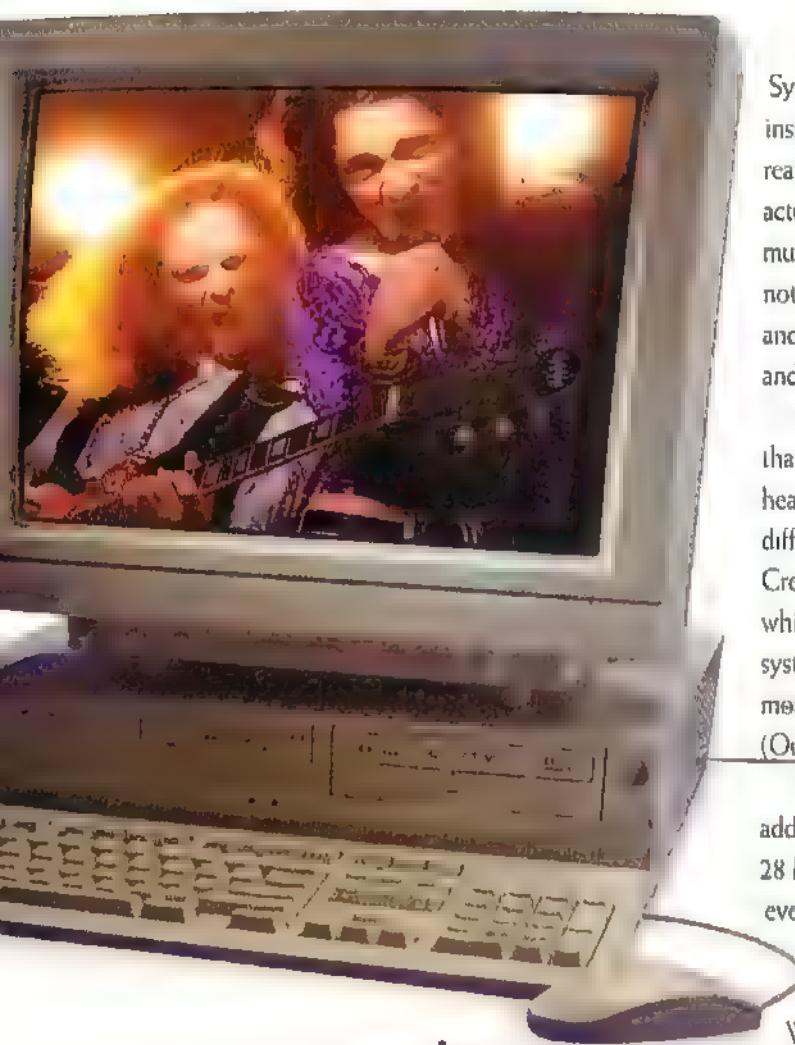
SERVE THE MASTER

When you begin a QUAKE game, you are telling your computer to do one of two things: set itself up as a game server or go out into the digital world and look for a server that's already running QUAKE. Even in a single-player game, QUAKE sets up your PC as a game server. "We've tried to keep the technology out of the way of people who just want to play a game," says Cash.

QUAKE uses a client-server multiplayer system as opposed to the peer-to-peer, or shared-state, method employed in DOOM

“ The lion's share of multiplay gamers still go mano-a-mano with a buddy via Ma Bell and a modem. Day by day, though, that's changing. ”

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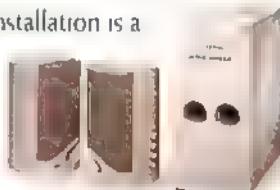
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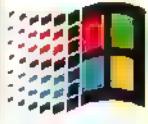


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TOO BIG FOR MULTIPLAY? E1L5. the Abyss, from Duke Nukem 3D, shows an interesting way to set up a huge level for multiplay. Weapons and health are concentrated at each end of the level, with special multipaly teleporters allowing players to zip back and forth without getting bogged down in the maze.

In DOOM, information was constantly sent back and forth between all the computers in a given game. At any given moment, the "game world" in all the players' PCs would be nearly identical. Essentially, each PC was running the game fully, by sending out information and processing the inputs from all the other players.

In some more arcane, dedicated multiplayer simulators, such as those used for military training, the peer-to-peer system is much more refined. Using a technique known as dead reckoning, the individual peers estimate the position of the other players in the environment, thereby cutting down on network traffic.

"We tried several variations on dead reckoning and were not able to find one that we were satisfied with," Cash says. "Although it's fine in many cases, the speed at which things change in QUAKE and the six degrees of freedom in movement cause dead reckoning to mispredict things by way too large a margin."

QUAKE uses a client-server approach, so that only one PC, the game server, has a grasp of the entire game world. The server is generally the fastest computer in a LAN setup, or is a dedicated server for an online game experience. The clients are the PCs participating in the game. They send packets of data up to the server for processing and redistribution, which

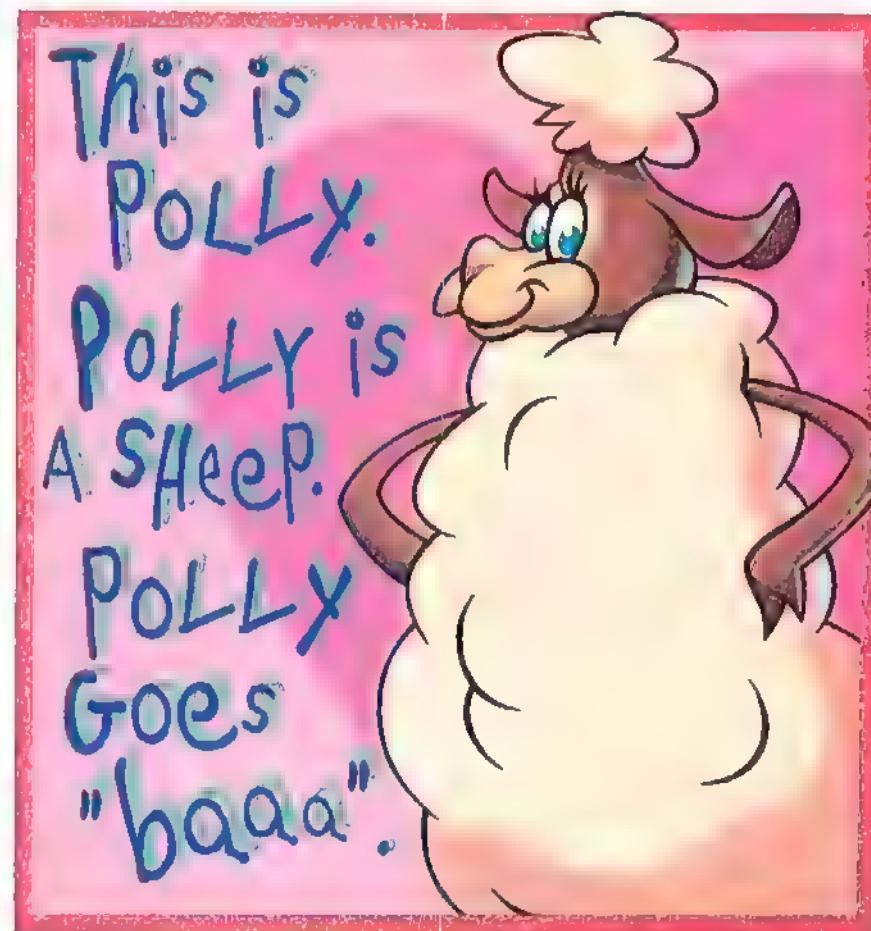
contain information about the player's actions: movement, changes in heading (and facing, since you can side-step without changing your facing), and weapons

firing. Chat messages also travel to the server, as well as administrative information like player name and uniform colors.

The server responds by sending information that shows players what's happening in the game world: creation of a new entities (such as a bullet, a new player or a teleporter flash), sounds, items that are picked up, a door opening, etc.

DATA-JAM

"If you have eight people blasting away at each other in a small area, this can be a fair amount of data," says Cash. This quantity of data can add up to a real problem when you consider play over the Internet. The primary concern of designers is dealing with the latency of an Internet-based game. Any multiplayer game, whether it uses a direct link, a LAN or the Internet, must be able to handle the varying amount of time needed to get information from the client to the server and back to the client. This latency problem becomes magnified if you are playing



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via the Internet and you use a modem to connect to your service provider.

With round-trip data-travel times of 120 to 300 milliseconds, the server can process only several input changes each second, which is a significant limitation with a fluid action game such as QUAKE.

"Latency problems can be avoided for quite a few things," Cash says, "but there are unavoidable cases where you have to grin and bear it. The Internet is also extremely variable. It's one great big resource being shared by millions of people so there's no such thing as a constant [data flow]."

One advantage of QUAKE's client-server design is that the game server can better handle the latency variances of the players. The server keeps the game running at top speed rather than slowing gameplay to the lowest common denominator—as happened in DOOM.

"If Player 1 has a low-quality Internet service provider and is getting really rotten play," says Cash, "it does not affect Players 2 and 3—other than to give them a slow-moving target. The game goes on."

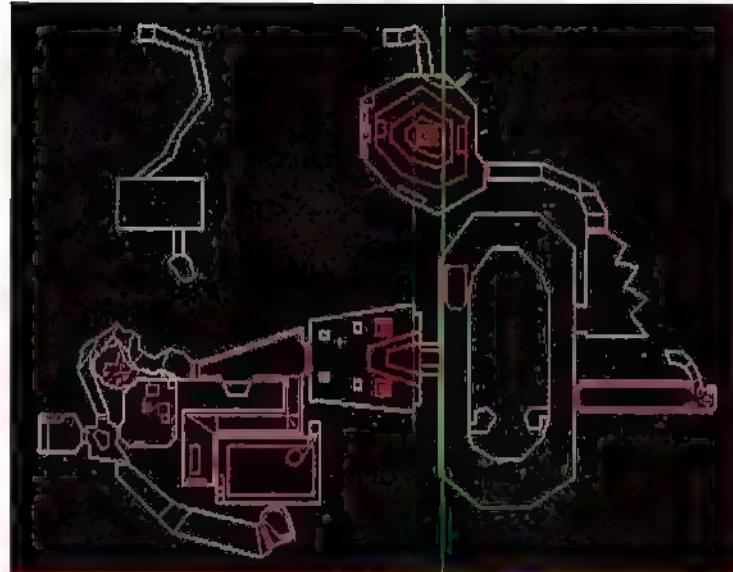
DUKE OF DESIGN

Multiplayer action games are a harmonious blend of two elements: the nuts and bolts of network communication and the less tangible elements of design that allow a shared experience to become truly enthralling.

"Multiplay is definitely the long-term value in a game," says 3D Realms' Richard Gray (otherwise known simply as the Levelord). "It keeps the game alive."

“ You can't create a single level that's great for single play and multiplay alike. The two are almost diametrically opposed. ”

—Richard Gray, 3D Realms



THINK IN CIRCUITS This Duke Level I design follows Gray's simple rules. The level features several circuits that are quick to traverse. A great trick in DUKE is to use underwater sections to connect distant reaches of the level.

Gray spends a large chunk of his new life (since retiring from the military as a software engineer for jet fighters) working

on levels for DUKE NUKE 'EM 3D.

"For two years, 16 hours a day, seven days a week, I've been in a little room

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Duke Nukem Multiplay Commandments

Richard Gray, the Levelord, offers these three pearls of wisdom to those designing their own Dukematch Duke Nukem levels.

1. "Always watch out for your frame rate. Remember that most people are still playing on 486s. A subset of that rule is KIS: Keep It Simple. Don't go crazy with too many textures. Keep to your theme."

2. "Keep your levels small. Make it so that any two players can find each other within a minute. If you think in terms of shapes, then consider a circle as the best template for your multipaly level. Running at full speed, you should be able to grab all of the weapons and ammo in the circuit, and run into the other player, within a minute."

3. "Come up with a cool idea. Most of those, for me, come from cool movies, or a lot of times I dream stuff."

working on DUK," confesses Gray. "I've been pretty much doing nothing for the last eight weeks but staring at a wall and giggling."

"You can't create a single level that's great for single play and multipaly alike," Gray cautions. "The two are almost diametrically opposed."

A single-player level tends to be larger and offer a more serpentine path, with the emphasis placed on exploration. Single-

player levels also present the player with a "critical path," which takes them from lesser monsters and weapons up through larger and more fearsome foes.

A multiple-player level doesn't benefit from the same type of design. The levels need to be small and the weapons need to be balanced, so that skill and excitement are always present. Weapons and health must be separated.

Another mandate of 3D Realms is that every nook and cranny must be accessible to players. A pseudo-exception of that rule is a siege area, in which a region has a wealth of health and weapons that a player can seize and attempt to hold

against an onslaught of other players.

"There really weren't any siege setups in Duke," says Gray, "but we might put some in the add-on pack. That's my favorite. I love trying to keep command of the area, or to storm the bunker."

Gray is a little guarded about his opinion of *QUAKE*. "I'm sort of sitting back and watching," Gray says. "I mean, do you want to be on the cutting edge like that? There are so many limits, like the small maps, and the palette that's been cut down to a quarter, and the limited polygon counts on the monsters... Or do you want to hang back and work with a technology that delivers the best gameplay? I'd take sprites any day if they can give me an exciting play experience."

While 3D Realms' Gray and Id's Cash may not see eye to eye on *QUAKE*, they do share one sentiment common to both games. "I have a single rule," says Cash, "Make it fun. If it's not fun, nothing else matters." ■

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The Beast Within

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MATURE

M

S I E R R A

Jurassic Lark

Scorpia Roams With The Dinosaurs in DINOTOPIA

Scorpia
Interactive's
Dinotopia,
based on the
books *Dinotopia*
and *The World
Beneath* by
James Gurney, is
set on an
uncharted island,

where dinosaurs are intelligent and live side by side with humans. Unlike most adventure games these days, the story is rather modest. You're not out to retrieve secret plans, catch a serial killer or save the universe. As Nathan, survivor of a shipwreck, you just want to be reunited with your sister Constance, who washed up somewhere else on the island. The game thus revolves around Nathan's efforts to find her, with a little help from both humans and dinos.

Everything in *DINOTOPIA* is very simple, which is not surprising, as this is a family-oriented product, aimed primarily at kids, although certainly playable by adults. The atmosphere is nonthreatening; the dinosaurs generally have a "cute" look to them; there is no strong language.

► Computer AD&D fans will have to wait a while for the first official AD&D role-playing game after SSI's *DEATHKEEP*. Interplay is working on two AD&D games, both of which have yet to be named, set for release in late 1997. The first will be set in Forgotten Realms and the second in the Planescape universe.

► After the success of *BURIED IN TIME*, Presto Studios has teamed up with Broderbund to publish the third game in the series, tentatively entitled *JOURNEYMAN PROJECT 3*. Presto has been working on the story for several months, and they've added staff to beef up their strategy of highly polished photorealistic graphics, good story, tough puzzles and a first-person per-

sonal perspective. This game also won't be released until the end of next year.

MAKING TRACKS

DINOTOPIA's interface can only be described as minimalist. At the start, there are only two cursor icons: a hand for picking things up, manipulating objects and talking to people; and dinosaur tracks for moving Nathan around the world. Later in the game, Nathan gains a dino companion, Atrick, and a third icon, an eye, becomes available. When the eye is clicked on an object or person, Atrick might comment on it, providing clues or information. Items are stored in a scrollable inventory box on the lower left of the screen, while at the bottom center is a picture of the island that you use to travel to new locations.

In keeping with its kid-oriented focus, most of *DINOTOPIA*'s puzzles are not hard to solve, and there aren't, in fact, many of them. Each location typically has one, or sometimes two, important things to do. For instance, the vital activity at the beginning is learning the language of *Dinotopia*, after which Nathan is able to travel around part of the island by dino



cart. The game is partly linear, but not strictly so. Nathan can go to any available location at any time, so backtracking to, for example, a previous town to pick up a missed item is no problem.

DINOTOPIA ran cleanly on my system, it never crashed, froze, locked up or exhibited bizarre graphics. There was one place where I ran into something that might be a bug (more on that shortly). Sound quality, however, was not all that good. The digital voice recordings were done at a very low level. Even with the volume bar at maximum for sound and minimum for music, I still had to turn up the volume on my speakers, the first time this has ever been necessary for a game with internal volume controls.

“This isn't so much a game as a *Dinotopia* travelogue.”

spective. This game also won't be released until the end of next year.

► If you're depressed that Bullfrog's *THE INDESTRUCTIBLES* may be another year away—and you're really desperate—you should know that Inverse Ink has teamed with DC Comics to bring Superman and Batman to CD-ROM. No word on whether they have the guts to electronically publish Frank Miller's classic graphic novel *The Dark Knight Returns*.

► Her Interactive, flushed by the success of *McKENZIE & CO.* has announced that their next game will be the *VAMPIRE DIARIES*. You bite, girl!

The speech itself was uneven in playback. Sometimes, it came through clearly; other times, there was a lot of shattering and skipping, making it very hard to hear what people or dinos were saying. For instance, the voice of the smith in Pumice Town played smoothly, with no breaks, whereas the speech of the two dinos who pulled the cart was only partly understandable. There was no reason I could discern for these differences, but it was certainly annoying, the more so as there is no option for text.

This sound quality, by the way, was with native Gravis support. Unlike too many other products these days, DINOTOPIA has drivers for a wide range of sound cards, which at least puts the game in reach of a greater number of players. You don't have to worry about "Sound Blaster and 100% compatibles only."

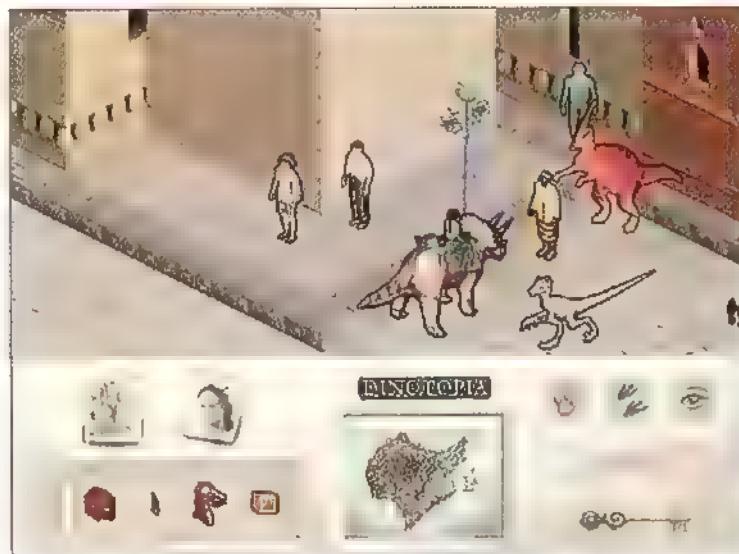
YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

One of the things I found irritating in the game was the lack of conversation—there are only monologues. Nathan himself, the star character, never speaks. When you click on someone, that person says something, and that's that. I often had the feeling that Nathan was being lectured to instead of talking to people.



A LITTLE PRIVACY, PLEASE! We don't know what this dinosaur is doing—and we don't want to know.

The place where there might be a transient bug is at the cliffs. Here Nathan has to jump off at the right moment and land on the back of a flying dino called a Skybox. The first time through the game,



SPARE CHANGE? In DINOTOPIA, people and dinosaurs walk the streets together

everything went fine (not counting the many jumps I made to get the timing right). However, in my second pass through the game, the Skybox simply didn't move. Nathan dropped down the cliffside, while the dino remained, unmoving, at the far right.

This was extremely puzzling, since I had done all the correct actions to bring the creature over, and repeated plays and restores didn't help. However, when I booted up the game fresh the next day, and restored the position, everything worked perfectly the first try. The Skybox flew over, Nathan landed on its back, and that was that. So if you have similar problems, you may want to try exiting the game, rebooting your system and then running the game again to see if that helps.

There are also parts of DINOTOPIA that are incredibly tedious. When you reach Alpine, you have to visit a monastery at the top of a mountain. So you go up the mountain. And up. And up. And...well, you get the idea. It appears to go on forever, with nothing to see except snow and pine trees, no one to talk to and nothing to do but walk on.

The desert is much the same way. Here you have to lead a blind dino back home. Of course, you don't know where that home is, so you begin trudging across the sands. As with the mountain, there isn't

much to see or do, and since this is a large area, walking around takes a long time. And because you don't want to lose the dino by going too quickly, you have to move slowly.

In real life, mountains may be tall and deserts large, but this is a game. Putting in wide expanses of essentially nothing does not add to fun or playability; it simply makes for a boring time.

My general impression is that this isn't so much a game but a Dinotopia triv-elogue. A good deal of the world is mainly backdrop and window dressing. Waterfall City, for instance, has a lot of buildings, but only three that can be entered. The rest exist just to make the city look like a city. Only a few of the characters are relevant to the story; the majority either have nothing to say or make some inconsequential remark that may shed some light on Dinotopia generally but otherwise doesn't mean a lot.

KID STUFF

Overall, DINOTOPIA, with its emphasis on exploration, easy puzzles, simple interface and generally laid-back atmosphere is most suitable for the young novice gamer who has little or no experience with adventures. Veteran gamers, and kids who have already played the likes of RUMBLE or PHANTASMAGORIA, may find this one too simple, and a bit dull. 

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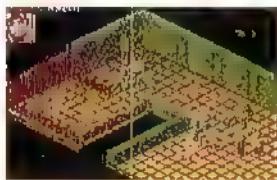


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Impossible Mission?

Scorpia Disavows Any Problems In Defusing MISSION CRITICAL

So here we are, coming out of another dry summer, and looking forward to all those Christmas releases that usually begin showing up around now. How many will actually make it to the shelves before year's end? Your guess is as good as mine. Personally, I never believe a game exists until it's in my hot little claws. That's the critical factor for me.

And speaking of critical...*Mission Critical* is one of the better things Legend has done in recent times (even if the game itself isn't very hard). There's a logical (if grim) reason for being alone on a spaceship that's in big trouble, and since it is in trouble, let's get right to it.

After watching the extensive opening movie, which explains why you're here and why the ship is in the condition it is, you begin the game standing in a corridor of the abandoned *Lexington*, with nothing

TRAILER
If you're having trouble finding things in *Mission Critical*, keep in mind that the game progresses very logically. In addition to the usual puzzles, there are important audio and visual clues. For example, you can find the hull breach on deck 2 simply by listening to the breeze. As the noise level goes up, you're getting closer; as it recedes, you are losing the trail.

but a note from the captain in your pocket. This is a good time to read it and follow the directions.

ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE

You can then listen to Tran's recorded message about the state of the ship. Let's see. There's a hull puncture on deck 2, the reactor is heading for meltdown, and the

main computer is offline. Aside from that, everything is more or less OK. While time seems to be precious here, you do have more than is apparent. There's no need to be too nervous about the situation, but on the other hand, you don't want to dawdle too much, either. Fixing the hull puncture is the first order of business, if only to reduce the noise level (heh). This is a simple matter, once you get your hands on the patch kit.

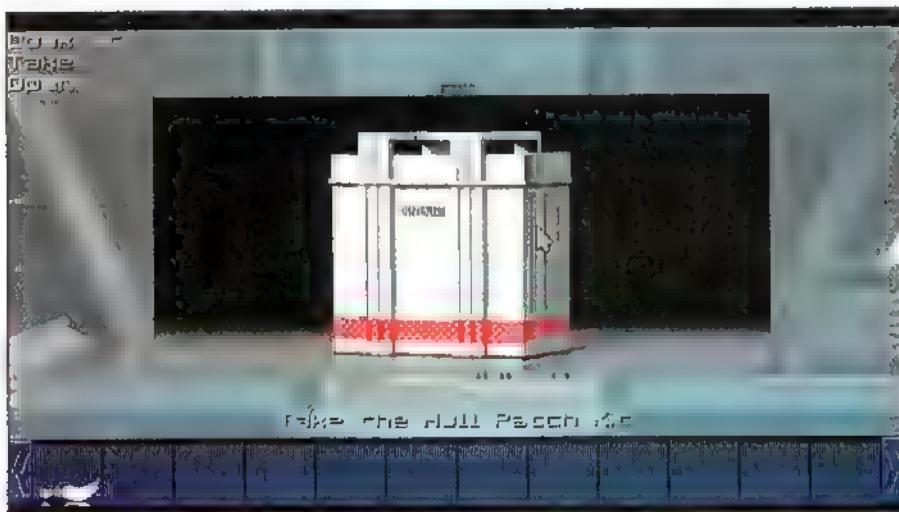
RADIATION LEAKS CAN MAKE YOU PULL YOUR HAIR OUT

Then you can begin making your way down to Engineering to work on the reactor. Go down one deck at a time (skip deck 4, which has nothing accessible), looking in all rooms you can, picking up everything you can, and remembering to open any storage cabinets you come across. As far as I could tell, there is no limit to what you can have in inventory.

You won't be able to make it directly to Engineering; there's a leak in the system and the elevator won't go down there. That means you have to reach the deck the hard way, by going through the maintenance corridors from Reactor Spaces. There's radiation in some of those corridors, too, and you don't have a radiation suit. So we'll hope you do have something else that will guide you along a safe path to Engineering. (Once you fix the reactor, you can take the elevator back up.)

Dealing with the reactor is a simple matter. You only need to position the gates so the coolant from the backup tank flows in a complete circuit through the reactor core. Just remember that this is a manual backup system, so the tank has to be physically opened first.

Now that the ship is safe (for the



IS IT STUFFY IN HERE? The first order of business is to fix the hull breach before explosive decompression occurs. You'll find the hull patch kit in the emergency stores cabinet above the computer terminal on deck 2.

THE CRITICS CAN'T ESCAPE THE SPELL

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VCR 2000 Unlike most games, the video segments here are important—especially the advice Commander Tran gives you. Check the clips to find clues about the reactor and check again after you get the computer back online.

moment), you can head back up to deck 5 and the main computer room. Passing the wreckage should be no problem (because you did all that looking around on the way down to Engineering, right?). However, Mr. Miura put a code lock on the computer room door. That might stump you for a little while, but the answer is as easy as pie.

Rebooting the system is easy, too, and then you get the last message from Tran. It seems the repair work isn't finished yet; now you have to fix the TCS communications dish so you can get in touch with your superiors. They didn't tell you about days like this when they appointed you supply officer.

The dish isn't an urgent problem, though, and you can leave that for the moment. This is the time to consider the material you picked up or saw in the various officers' rooms. Especially the room of the person who, from all evidence, was a spy or traitor working for the other side.

THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONS CAN WRECK YOUR DAY

Uh oh! There's a bomb somewhere on the Lexington. I'll bet it's armed and counting down to detonation, too. Finding this nefarious device has just become a top priority. Luckily, you don't have to run all over the ship looking for it. A moment's thought should tell you there is a rather obvious place for the bomb. Consider where you found the info and the key.

OK, now all the major problems have finally been dealt with. Whew! If you haven't done so yet, take a little time for a nice, long chat with the computer. With

the main system back up, you have access to a lot of information, some of it vital.

When you're done with that, the TCS dish awaits. Unfortunately, the last of one of the spare parts you need has already been taken.

Fortunately, it is easy enough to get, as you should know where to look for it. The real stumper is the fact that the vac suit down in the shuttle bay has no air supply. This makes doing an EVA a trifle difficult. Good thing there's a cutting solution to this obstacle.

You can finally contact Admiral Decker at Erebus. This requires setting up a link through a number of relay satellites. There were 12 in my setup (counting Erebus as the last one); it may be possible to do it with less.

Now you can transmit over the link and have a long conversation with Decker. I don't suggest following his orders. Being respectfully obstinate is the best course to take here (especially if you want to finish the game).

When you're done with that, you can bring over the planetary lander from the science ship *Serieho*. Nice to know, it has a more than adequate supply of oxygen tanks. Help yourself to a couple (and anything else you find, of course). Then you can suit up and prepare to launch the lander to the surface of Persephone.

Then again, maybe not. The lander



IT TAKES A THIEF After the ship is safe, don't be squeamish about grabbing clues and running. The captain's log is interesting but not really helpful. The crew manifest is essential, however, for access codes.

ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE

Once you're suited up, you can depressurize and head to the great outdoors, as it were. Reaching the dish (you won't fall off the ship hull) and making the necessary repairs is simple. Happily, this is the very last of damage control that you need to do.

Before contacting Erebus, let's find out what's in that safe in Dahl's room. You have what you need to bypass the retinal scanner by now; you only have to select the correct pattern. Initially, this may seem hard, but it isn't. The spy's mind moved in obvious ways.

After clearing out the safe's contents,

begins a long—very long—preflight checklist. We have to do something to pass the time here, and with enemy vessels on the way, the moment you've been dreading has arrived. Yes, it's time to get hyped up.

Not this very second, though. First activate the main tactical console on the bridge for instructions. It always helps to know what you're doing. When the preliminaries are completed, you enter a battle simulator with eight scenarios. All eight must be completed successfully before you're ready for the real thing.

Luckily for those of us who aren't good at these sorts of maneuvers, you can pull the difficulty down to Easy and let the

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computer do it for you. You still have to sit through all the scenarios when you do that.

After all that (and having saved the game as a precaution), just hang around on the bridge and eventually the first enemy wave arrives. This time, it's for real, so try not to lose too many drones. You want as many as possible available for the second wave that shows up after the first battle.

I LOVE CRASH LANDINGS

Enough time has now passed, and you can finally ride the lander to a (crash) landing on the surface of Persephone. Oh well. Let's take a look around and see if we can find that tower. Yep, there it is, with a big ice hill in front of it. Too bad you can only make it halfway up. Blast it! So near and yet so far. This is a good time to consider your spare oxygen tank, among other things. When the way has been cleared, you enter a cavern. Reaching the bridge across the chasm should not be hard; you



This is the secure storage area where critical opto-electronic and mechanical spares are kept in reserve.

SPACE-HARDWARE GEEK The Central Stores room might resemble a sale at Chain Link Fence Discount Electronics, but it's fairly easy to figure out which parts you need to fix the communications relay.

brings you to, as you soon learn, Los Angeles, which is not in very good shape. We'll worry about the cause later; right now, you need to reach the ominous black tower in the distance. If you had a crowbar, you could probably open the mangled door. I wonder where you could get one?

Once in the control room, you can power up the Maglev transportation system. You just need something to keep the override switch down (there's not much left in the inventory), and then you can take a wild ride to the tower. Entry to the tower is fairly simple, thanks to the tank. When you get in, you find...oh no! It's a maze of twisty little passages, all alike.

Arrggh! But wait! Don't panic; there's an easy solution. If you try going through on your own, you'll be hopelessly lost. So don't do that. Watch a moment, and what to do becomes obvious.

BEHIND DOOR # 1

Eventually, you'll reach a large room with two portals. Take either one; they both go to the same place, a door straight out of the Twilight Zone. Opening the door is really simple, and you

don't need my help. Once through it, you'll meet a couple of life forms, who provide the explanation of what's been happening (or has happened) since you left Persephone. It ain't pretty.

The demonstration/puzzle with the Jiffies is easy. This is just a matter of going backwards and forwards, and talking to a Jiffy in between, until you've got them all home. Then it's your turn to go backwards, back to before everything went wrong. Unfortunately, that puts you in Sick Bay, with Tian holding a gun on you and not believing a word of your story. Well, we can't really blame her. However, your time to fix things is limited, and you've got to do something about Tian quickly. Hmmm, notice the remote control there on the autodoc? Remember the note on the medical console? Do what needs doing when the opportunity presents itself. After that, the remainder of the game is automatic. Until next time, happy adventuring!



HOT UNDER THE COLLAR? The emergency coolant really isn't that big a deal. Look in your Utility Belt of Infinite Storage for a tool to open the tank's manual backup system

ought to have everything you need to line up a way over.

The bridge leads to four smaller caves. One has a basin with a couple of rods, one has a yellow pyramid, the third a blue cube, and the fourth an other rod. You shouldn't need any help getting the cube and pyramid or putting them where they belong. If the next step has you puzzled, think awhile and you may get a hot idea or two. The last rod will become available, and its use is obvious. You only need to add one more thing; even a small scrap will do.

This leads to all sorts of interesting results, especially a portal of some sort that

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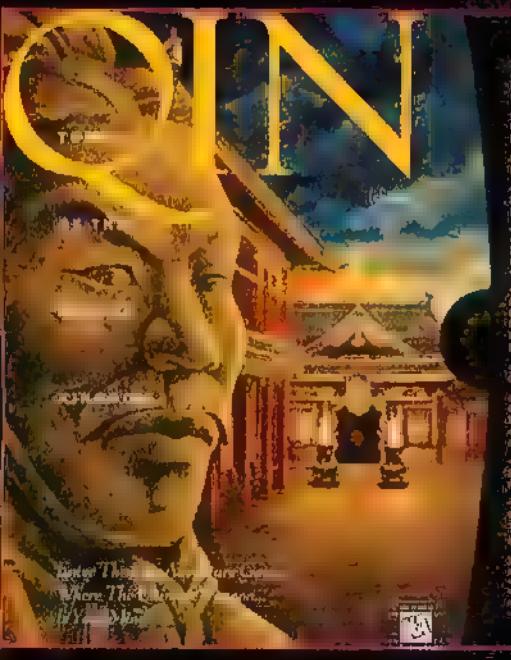
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D Gets An F

Acclaim's Real-Time Murder Mystery Is Two Hours Too Long

by Mark Clarkson

Talk about bad news from home. Laura is settling in for another semester at college when she receives word that her father—a respected doctor, scientist and director of the Los Angeles National Hospital—has gone berserk, shooting people in the halls of the hospital and taking hostages. Our heroine scoots up to L.A., where the police let her past the barricades and into the hospital. The hallways are littered with bodies—more so than usual—but before she can look for her dad, some evil relative of the water tentacle from *The Abyss* swallows her and whiskers her off to another dimension.

Welcome to D, where, according to the box, "solving the mystery means visiting the dark pit of your soul." I wish I could report a D-lightfully frightening good time, but, other than enjoying the game's creepy ambience, I was D-ecidedly disappointed. You'll recognize elements of a lot of games in this first-person horror adventure—*Myst*, *THE 7TH GUEST*, *PHANTASMAGORIA*, *THE DARK PIT*—every one of which is far superior.

The game takes place in a "house" which supposedly exists inside Laura's wacky dad's head. If this is Dad's mind, it's pretty sparsely furnished, and you'll find few clues here as to what's going on. You'll confront the occasional gratuitous logic puzzle, but most of D's secrets involve finding the keys to various locked doors (yawn).

A TWO-HOUR TOUR

D has some rather interesting ideas about gameplay. Most interesting of all is the two-hour real-time time limit. That's right—you have exactly two hours to play this game through from beginning to end. In addition, you can't save your game. If



FEEL LUCKY, PUNK? Redefining the low end in bedside manner, the good doctor in D gets ready to blow your head off.

you lose or stop, you have no recourse but to start the game over again. Two hours is an awfully short time to solve a mystery of any complexity, but since D isn't a mystery of any complexity, you'll be running out of game in about two hours anyway.

I discovered no way to die in D, or any way to lose at all short of letting the two hours expire. In fact, Laura seems virtually indestructible; if she fell down a 30-foot well and landed on the stone floor at least a dozen times, each time, she stood up, shook her head, slowly brushed dust from her lapels and climbed out of the well. I, on the other hand, was going to scream if I had to watch her go through that tedious routine *one more time*.

That's another big problem with D: movement through the game is painfully slow. Laura walks everywhere slowly, carefully, as befits the heroine in a creepy movie. That wouldn't bother me much if there was some way to skip past scenes you've already walked through, or if you weren't in such a hurry to solve the puzzles for the third time so you didn't have to start the darned game over again. The combination of a time limit, no save game feature and a plodding pace is especially maddening.

The plot, when it finally unfolds, is ter-

ribly lame. The ending fails to throw much light on the beginning, while the actual game, sandwiched in between, has little to do with either one of them. I found out what the "D" stands for, but other than that, I was left scratching my head, muttering "uh."

Any quasi-experienced adventurer will finish this game by the second or third try. That makes for a whole four to six hours of gameplay, most of which is spent walking slowly through a house. According to the box, D sports multiple endings, but you'll have to take Acclaim's word for it. With no way to save your game, the only way to experience multiple endings is to go back to the very beginning and play the entire game over, trying different things here and there to see if they affect the ending. No thanks. We D-cline.

APPEAL: Horror-adventure fans looking for a quick night's entertainment with no long-term commitment.

PROS: Nice modeling, camera work and music. An acceptably creepy ambience.

CONS: Plodding pace, two-hour time limit, no save game feature, limited gameplay, no replay value.



Price: \$53.00

System Requirements:

486DX2-66 or better,
Windows 95, 8 MB RAM
4 MB hard disk space,
1MB VESA-compatible
SVGA graphics adapter, 2x
CD ROM drive (4x recommended), Windows 95
compatible sound card,
Protection: None (CD must
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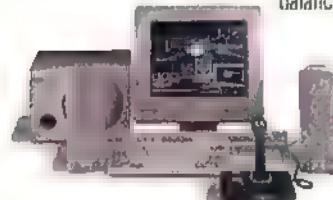
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Circle Reader Service #182

Destruction With No REGRET

CGW's Action Game Of The Year Returns For An Encore

H

yes: bloodshot. Lips: bone dry. Brain: liquid and putrified. Action games have always made their mark on the player. The good ones corrupt the body

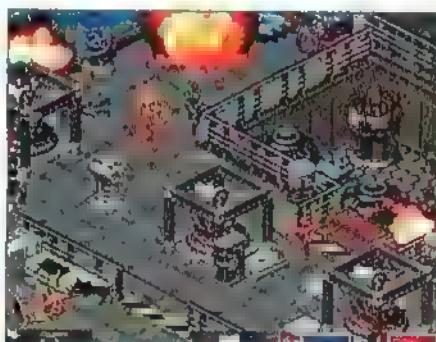
clock, invade dreams and drag productivity down to the killing floor. But it's only recently that we've been able to return the favor and make a mark of our own.

Of course, you could see the whole act of computer gaming as a signature. A game throws up an obstacle; the player pacifies it, works around it, makes it invisible. But the game usually leaves behind no evidence of that process and it's that evidence that makes games more personal. It's like staking a claim: This is the hole I dug. This is the blood I shed. That's the machine I snuffed.

Game designers have of late come to understand the urge to leave something of yourself behind, beyond three initials in a high-score table. So IRXEN gave us breakable windows. DUKE NUKEM 3D

gave us blood-stained, bullet-riddled and destroyable walls. We're heading in the direction of the wholly combustible environment. The game's over when there's nothing left.

Sometimes the best-demolished games come from unexpected quarters. Origin ingeniously reengineered what had proved something of a liability in ULTIMA VIII—an experiment in avatar action that wasn't fully appreciated by the RPG's hard-core followers—into an asset in CRUSADER: NO REMORSE. The result



BLOWING CHUNKS Amidst fiery explosions, our hero uses one of *No Regret's* new weapons to turn a hapless opponent's body into a collection of flesh chunks

was a very English angled-down action game—essentially, an uncartoony *Escape from the Planet of Robot Monsters* with more puzzles—whose commercial and artistic success still resonates in the recent release of Donmark's TOTAL MAYHEM and SCI's GENDER WARS.

For the follow-up, due in September, look for more of the same—in the best sense of the term. I've played an alpha version of CRUSADER: NO REGRET for the last week or so, and I'm hooked all over again. My signature is all over its heretofore factory-like levels—which I've left nonfunctional—and will be again

In this 10-mission stand-alone game, you're still a renegade Sileneer working for the rebels, still forging your way toward exit elevators and teleports, and still wearing that absurdly shiny red suit that a blind bull would spot a mile away. The details of the story were a bit vague in the version I played, but it opens aboard a star freighter bound for the World Economic Consortium's moon base and ends with a toe-to-toe slugfest with that outfit's bad-guy chairman. Once again, you're using the inhabitants, rifling

"We're heading in the direction of the wholly combustible environment."

The latest TOTAL MAYHEM patch is online at the Eidos Web site and significantly upgrades your units' pathfinding. Eidos says it fixes the problem of cyborgs getting stuck behind walls and trees and splitting up needlessly. If it works in eliminating those annoying control problems, then the patch will make TOTAL MAYHEM a better game to play.

The sequel to Interplay's PlayStation hit, *Loaded*, is inbound for the PC. Look for the Windows 95 native version of RE-LOADED in December. The top-down shoot-em-up promises more strategy, character and interactivity...and copious amounts of blood.

continued on page 134 ►►►

through their belongings and throwing switches that open doors.

Oh yes, I forgot. You get to blow things up...big-time. Everything in *No Regret* seems to have a jet fuel tank inside it, and everything is negotiable. The artists have essentially created two parallel libraries of in-game objects. One is normal and functioning, with nice flickering lights and blowing steam. The other is entirely blown to hell. In *No Regret*, it's blown deeper into hell—everything must go!—and you'll write your path across the moon in handsome, burned-out transformers, equipment, lockers and crates. I hope the Consortium is insured.

I happily, the artists have exercised the same creativity on death scenes. Of course, usually you'll just open up with your sidearm—machine pistol, shotgun, rocket launcher—and the enemy will fall down and cooperatively issue a little puddle of blood.

But on the first mission, you'll find a pipeline with a control wheel. Turn the wheel, and the darkened room next door will spring into view as a pipe vents a white cloud behind a waiting guard. He's frozen (and, if you replay it, in at least a couple of different statuesque poses, to boot). Now you can drop by, give him a shot, and reduce him to a sort of human Shurpee. Or you can just let the forces of

►►continued from page 133

Also coming from Interplay is *Descent To Undermountain* for the PC—a 3D first-person action game with RPG elements, such as level advancement and sub-quests. Set in the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* world of Forgotten Realms, your character will brave the dungeons below the city Waterdeep and ultimately confront the Drow goddess, Lolth. *Descent To Undermountain* will use the *Descent* 3D game engine and is due in October.

The 3DO 32-bit console is effectively dead, but before it went it gave birth to a raft of Pentium-class PC games. The 3DO Company's software arm, Studio 3DO, will release in October the isometric blaster *CAPTAIN QUASAR*, the *BALL BLAZER*-like *BATTLESPORT*, *KILLING TIME* (in which Doom-like action meets 7TH GEAR-like FMV), and *STARFIGHTER*, a 3D flying shooter.

INSIDE ACTION

WTG TIPS!

►WTG WEN 11 needs a good cheat. Otherwise, the whole thing is one pitched battle. Hit Backspace, type in one of the code words below (without the nasty quotes), press Enter and voila: You're cheating.

"Levelx" (where x is a number from 1 to 15) warps you between levels.

"Nobreak" prevents that annoying tendency of weapons to shatter.

"Showmap" gives you the full map.

"Spells" gives you nine blasts of each spell.

"Potions" does the same for the drinks. And "killme" does the obvious.

nature do their work, and wait until he melts into a silvery pool with a bone in it.

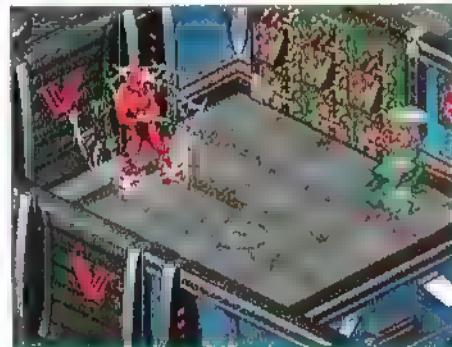
I've also created shrieking human torches. (What a way to go: naked and cooked.) Or, as I discovered in the names on the second mission, naked, coked and skinless. If I go this way, I hope someone puts a pair of old pants on me, puts my head on a pillow and turns off my computer. But there's no dignity in *No Regret*.

Oh, you'll notice a few other touches. You won't find credits on the corpses you leave behind—the Weasel from *No Remorse* seems not to be a factor here—and so have less reason to put hapless civilian employees to the sword for their wallets. The puzzles are thicker on the ground, and the artwork more solid and streamlined.

Undiscovered areas and level borders are now represented by stretches of metallic ceiling rather than darkness.

And *No Regret* struck me as significantly (and usefully) harder than its predecessor. While I was able to fairly coast through the original *CRUSADER* without worrying about getting killed so much as getting lost, I spent a good two days slogging through the first *No Regret* mission. It's a richer, more conspiratorial environment, and I can't imagine anyone who enjoyed *No Remorse* not enjoying *No Regret*.

At the same time, on a conceptual level, I can anticipate complaints that—as I said at the outset—this is more of the same. *No Regret* is to the original what *WING COMMANDER IV* is to *WING*



ASHES TO ASHES Another of the ghastly ways to go in *No Regret* is reduction to ashes; here the foe is being turned into fine dust.

mechanism because the alternate path is so fraught with robotic ugliness. I hope *CRUSADER II*—due in the second half of 1997—gives the game a touch more sophistication.

In the end, though, none of these tactical considerations stopped me from playing, or even slowed me down. Today, I've been at it almost eight hours straight. My eyes are bloody, my lips are dry and you could probably stick my brain out with a straw.

But I'm happy. And I have *No Regret*. ☐

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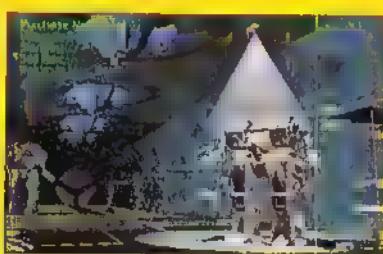
I've got you in my sights

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DUKE'S Ugly Cousin

Capstone's Second Witch Hunt Is Anything But Bewitching

by Peter Olafson

I don't think anyone set their watch by Capstone's *WITCHAVEN* when that 3D action-RPG game surfaced last year, but a lot of people craned their necks to see what time it was. The first game to use 3D Realms' Build engine, *WITCHAVEN* was hardly going to beat out *QUAKE*, but it was a step beyond *DOOM*, and there was plenty of space between those two industry landmarks to throw one hell of a party.

Since then, of course, the life of the party has arrived: 3D Realms released its own Build game—the immaculate *DUKE NUKEM 3D*—and an interesting side effect has been to throw *WITCHAVEN*'s flaws into relief. *DUKE*, polished and refined over months, emerged pink and shiny from the bath.

WITCHAVEN now comes off more like the poor cousin with dirt under his fingernails.

Which is just another way of saying that, with novelty no longer in its corner, the recent *WITCHAVEN II: BLOOD VENGEANCE* has its work cut out for it. It has to hang by its own hook, and I'm afraid that hook doesn't have much bite. While a step up from *WITCHAVEN* in certain respects, the execution in others is mediocre at best.

A witch whose sister you killed in the first game wants to exact an elaborate sort of revenge, and you're to explore 15 large,

sequential levels to accommodate her. As usual, this means depriving everybody in sight of their lives while artfully preserving your own, making off with whatever was on the floor behind them, and using II to reach deeper and darker places while advancing in level.

THE POOR MAN'S DUKE NUKE

The graphics have advanced, too.



► NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT... *WITCHAVEN II* isn't nearly as good as *Duke Nukem*, or even *WITCHAVEN* for that matter. The game is sluggish and buggy, and gameplay is uninspired.

Ornamental touches like stained glass and tapestries abound. (There's also a wonderfully reflective dark water effect, but, alas, no way to swim beneath it.) Weapons like arrows and axes stick in walls they've struck and some can be retrieved. Room architectures are more elaborate—with bigger and broader levels. And while the earlier levels make disappointingly little use of Build's most 3D-like features, the effects improve as you progress. Level 12 in particular has some nifty spiral staircases. The goofy-looking, stuffed-animal monsters are still around,

but the game's much better supplied with burnished knights—well drawn and animated and all too willing to stick you in the back—if they can stop walking into walls before they reach you.

And remember how you'd sometimes find the goblins in *WITCHAVEN* fighting each other, or how they'd sometimes pick up their sword and shield before coming out to play? Well, here you'll sometimes

find enemy troops praying in chapels on one knee. I don't know why I like this, but there's just something appealing about NPCs doing something with their lives other than waiting around to whack you with a sword.

However, that's an effect rather than a theme; there's no sense of story or progression. Oh, sure, there's the status quo rendered introduction and end-of-level screens showing your stats. But this is very much a packet of independent levels, linked by teleports, which could probably have been arranged in almost any order. *DUKE* often gives you a glimpse of the level into which you were headed, and *DOOM* at least displayed a map between levels. *WITCHAVEN II* doesn't even have that glue.

FOUL ERRORS

Moreover, *WITCHAVEN II* is home to a whole host of technical annoyances—both major and minor—that often reduce playing to a chore. There's the speed...I take that back. It's more like, "What speed?" As I was still slashing my way through the first level in 640 x 480 SVGA on a 133 MHz Pentium with 32

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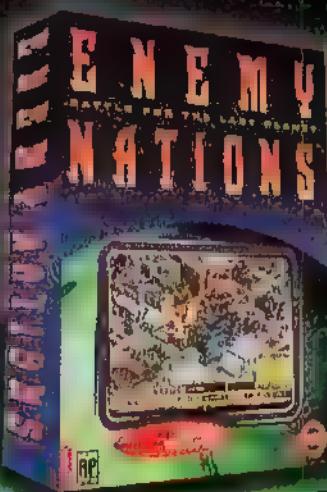
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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. In Witchaven II's favor, action is very intense and ferocious: Battles are gory, hand-to-hand melees.

megs of RAM and a 4-meg video card, my character, without warning, suddenly started walking as if he had a gimp leg. Ordinarily, I'd assume that I'd been hit with a slowing spell or had collected a cursed item...except that *WITCHAVEN II* has neither. The game had stopped scrolling and started jerking.

The problem—and this is supported by online reports—seems to involve the elaborate animation that appears above the pools used to enchant the players' weapons. Once I stepped into one, my weapons glowed, the animation vanished (it's a one-time only deal) and my speed went from 60 to 0 in 1 second.

Would that this were the only problem. Keypresses were routinely delayed or ignored to the extent that it got to be a pain to cycle through menus or just type in the name of a saved game. Every time I accessed the options screens and returned to the game, I had to recall the status bar at the screen bottom. In *WITCHAVEN*, repeated use of a weapon wore it down; here they've carried that model to a ridiculous extreme. I was frequently informed that my sword had become useless after simply swinging it in empty air. (How hard would it have been for the program to check to see whether it had actually hit something rather than counting swings?) There's more. The player appeared to climb stairs on his knees. When an ax struck an open door and the door then closed, the ax would remain suspended in empty space. I walked through closed doors and lived, walked into walls and died, and sometimes found

myself warping to a different part of the map without doing anything special to get there.

Sorry, but I'm being paid to review this game, not beta test it, and I'm surprised these problems weren't caught and corrected during production.

Beyond that, there are some gameplay issues that failed to impress. If you're going to strew piles of gold and silver around an RPG, hell, man, don't do it simply for its own sake (i.e., experience points). Give us somewhere interesting to use it: a weapons shop, an inn, a monster who wants a bribe, a mercenary who needs a job.

And the final villain, with the ornate name of Cimic-Argoth, is no great shakes.



WHAT AM I NOW? Despite the fantasy trappings, this isn't an RPG. The story isn't compelling, there's no character interaction and you're given nothing to do except kill goofy monsters.

For one thing, she's far too easy to kill. Knock her minions down with the Nuke spell, then start launching pike axes at long distance, and she's history. And for another, I wasn't able to work up either righteous rage or lunatic fear at this rather petite woman in the tight outfit. I didn't want to hit her with axes; I wanted to buy her a jelly doughnut and a cup of coffee. (Nice long ending animation, though!)

NOT EXACTLY A SAVING GRACE

For all that, *WITCHAVEN II* does have a leg up on the competition in two respects. One is its ferocious difficulty level. *DUKE* often allowed you to gun the baddies down at a distance with high-tech weapons, when you got around to using

your foot, it was typically when your enemies were the size of thimbles. Here, supplied with sword and shield (and as much magic as you can grab), you're often expected to go toe-to-toe with the enemy and effectively club the game into submission to make progress.

It's work, hard work, and perhaps in the interest of realism it *should* be hard work. On one hand, this is a welcome change from the kill-me-please monsters of *DOOM* and its variants, and anticipates a generation of hand-to-hand 3D action games to come. The flipside: It's also likely to be an unfamiliar, and potentially infuriating, experience for action gamers used to quick resolutions and easy victories.

As in *DUKE*, the Build editor is on the CD. Unlike in *DUKE*, it's actually supported by 20 pages of the 52-page printed manual, which is a whole lot more convenient than having to print the thing out on your own and thumb through dozens of pages of look-alike text. Unfortunately, neither set of docs is particularly complete, and both are lacking a basic walk-through. Also, why isn't copying the editor onto your hard disk an installation option?

But these are relatively trivial advantages.

There's a new kid in

town, name of *DUKE*, and he's set the standard for Build games. For the inevitable *WITCHAVEN III*, Capstone would do well to take a long, close look at something different.

APPEAL: Anyone who wants a medieval slugfest and isn't too picky about sluggish gameplay.

PROS: Ferocious, in-your-face action and an included Build editor.

CONS: Sluggish game speed, buggy gameplay, no continuity in the story and a generally weak use of the Build engine.



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Kill 'Em All!

*A Guide To Inflicting Maximum Damage
In QUAKE DeathMatch*

by V. Long



...From the squishy splatter of a body bursting apart, I knew I had teleported onto some poor sucker who had stepped across the spawn spot at just the wrong time. I savored the tele-frag for only a second before the full-auto staccato of nailguns rudely reminded me that it's kill or be killed. Circle-strafing each of my assailants, I lobbed the grenades that would scatter their giblets in spectacular tentacles of red...

Opening illustration by Dan Fitzpatrick.
Maps illustrated by Jack Rodrigues.
Special thanks to John Romero at id Software.

Leave it to id Software, developers of QUAKE, to rekindle the twisted desire to immerse ourselves in visceral bloodbaths where we mercilessly chase down playmates, blast them to bits, and gloat like fiends—all good-natured fun, of course. Whether you play a head-to-head duel via modem or engage in one of the numerous 16-player slaughterfests hosted all over the Internet, the path to the biggest grins is paved with everyone else's body parts.

There's little doubt you're in a hurry to make as much progress along that murderous path as possible. So here is a glimpse of how I whip through my buddies like a hurricane. Elite Death-

Matchers will find much of what I say intimately familiar; those less hardcore should find these pointers helpful in accelerating their assault on the upper tier of DeathMatch dominance.

GUN CONTROL

Ever notice in DOOM or Q3Arena (the public QUAKE "engine test"), how you'd effortlessly hit whatever was in front of your gun? Well, QUAKE is a lot more realistic: no more auto-aiming, so the farther away the target, the more difficult it is to hit. By whatever means, learn to hit the bull's-eye—especially when it runs around and shoots back. It might help to type "CROSSHAIR 1" at the console to activate Crosshair mode. Lead your target. Aim where it will be, not where it was.

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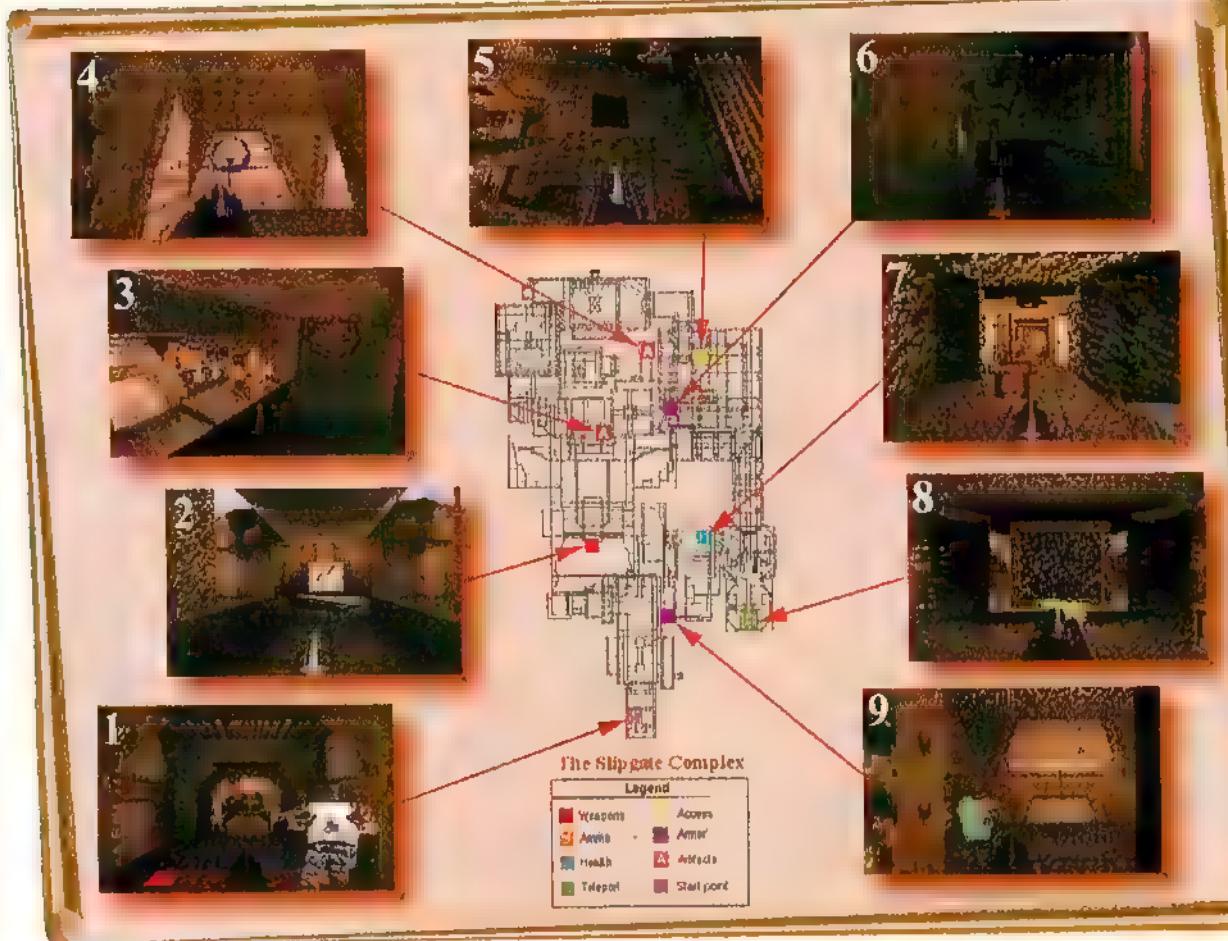


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INSCAPE™



Reading A Map

The most important thing to consider when looking at the Quake maps is that these levels are truly 3D: floors on top of floors on top of sewers. So remember that not everything shown on this map is on the same level. Let's use the Slipgate Complex map, pictured here, to demonstrate how to read a Quake map (most gamers are intimately familiar with this first level). The pictures are visual cues to only a few of the key locations on the map. While this map doesn't show you every item, the four following DeathMatch maps do show the locations of all weapons, health and power-ups.

1 This is where you start when playing a single-player game at the Slipgate Complex

2 This is the lower level when you walk out of the elevator, with the bridge in front of you. In the water, to the right, is a cavern leading to an

underground pool with Mega Health.

3 In DeathMatches, you'll find the Pentagram of Protection here. To get to this ledge, you need to find the portal that teleports you here.

4 Quad Damage is here. Shoot at the TV screen with the rotating Earth to open the secret door.

5 This is the sniper point that's above you when you are running down the winding slopes. Make a running jump onto the stairs next to the opening, and then hop in to find Mega Health.

6 Here is the BioSuit, which you need to don before you take the plunge into the green slime.

7 This is the location of the Mega Health that you find after jumping under the bridge and swimming into the pool. Behind the health is a secret

door that lets you out into the exit room. Swimming right, instead of left for the Mega Health, takes you up an elevator to Grey Armor.

8 When you get the BioSuit, turn left, dive into the water and do a 180-degree turn. To your left is an underwater corridor. This corridor runs directly underneath and along the same path as the corridor that takes you to the exit room. Swim all the way down, and at the end of the passageway, swim up through a hole in the floor. Here you'll find the yellow armor, grenade launcher and the teleport portal that takes you to where the Pentagram is located.

9 The elevator at the underground pool with the Mega Health takes you to this secret door. If you step out, you'll find Grey Armor and the corridor you began in.

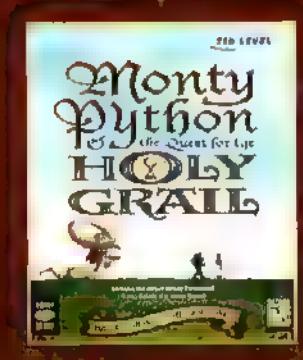


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Don't get trigger happy though. Use short, controlled bursts, even for cover fire. Better yet, develop the steely nerves required to hold your fire until the right

moment; this will ultimately earn you more frags than you can imagine. Take a tick longer to aim carefully, particularly with the double-barrel shotgun or grenade launcher, and... *blammo!* You've bagged another frag. The only exception is the Thunderbolt: Swinging the lightning beam side to side cuts into anyone within its arc.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE

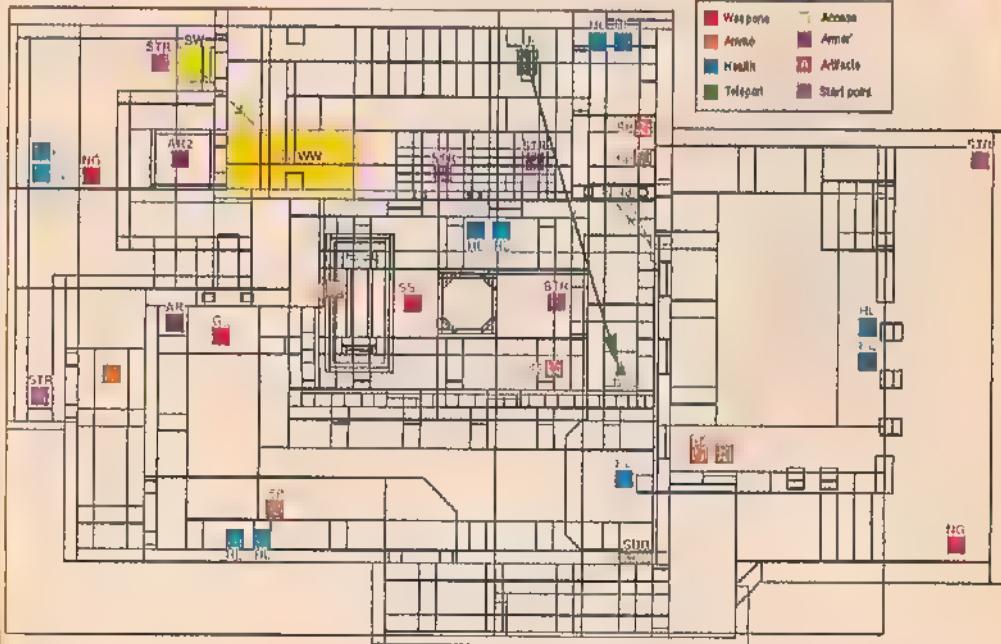
Your adversaries will have a tough time aiming at targets they can't see. Although the Ring of Shadows power-up provides complete invisibility (except for your eyeballs), you can also find excellent concealment in the deep shadows generously sprinkled throughout *Quake*. Avoid crossing open spaces, and stay close to the walls.

The 3D nature of *Quake* underscores the importance of spotting threats from above and below. Accordingly, "freelook," the ability to look up and down, is invaluable. You'll need freelook to blow snipers out of their perches overhead, as well as to safely negotiate water and low-gravity environments. Although freelook is available using either keyboard and mouse, it's most intuitive with the latter ("mouselook"). Mouselook lets you look in all directions fluidly—which is absolutely vital to rapid target acquisition and superior accuracy.

MIGHTY MOUSE

The mouse is good for more than just mouselook. It's at the core of Death-

Place Of Two Deaths



Legend	
Weapon	Access
Armor	Attack
Health	Attack
Teleport	Start point

Weapons	
NG	Nailgun
SNG	Super Nailgun
SSG	Super Shotgun
GL	Grenade Launcher
RL	Rocket Launcher
LT	Lightning

Ammo	
CL	Cells
RK	Rockets
SP	Spikes
SS	Shotgun Shells

Health	
HL	Health

Teleport	
DS	Destination
TP	Teleport

Access	
DR	Door
SDH	Social Door
SW	Switch
WV	Walkway

Armor	
AR	Armor
AR1	Armor 1
AR2	Armor 2
ARV	Armor Inv

Artifacts	
IS	Invisibility
INV	Invulnerability
SD	Super Damage

Start Point	
STR	Start Point

DeathMatch 101: The Basics

No matter how good you are at beating up monsters solo or cooperatively, expect an entirely different beast when you play against fellow humans. Burn these basics into your brain so you can do unto your playmates before they do unto you:

- Never stop moving, and always run. This makes you a much more challenging target. Simply toggle on the Always Run option in the menu. Even if someone spots you, you won't be easy to hit.
- Hide when necessary. Staying alive is a prerequisite to earning frags, as well as of depriving your enemy of another notch on his belt.
- Learn the level. Know where you are and where you're going, so you can hit the ground running as soon as you spawn on a level. You want to beat everyone else to the power-ups, which often require extended trips through slime. (Be sure to grab that Bio-Suit before diving in.) Beware of potential ambush points and kill zones; other dangerous spots include teleport destinations. If you've done your homework, you'll know the places to avoid. Also,

being able to recognize telltale sounds from different parts of the level gives you information about where the other players are.

- Help the Quake environment beat up on other players. Pump some lead into a radioactive container and watch the resulting conflagration clear the entire room. Blast someone into the molten pools for a permanent visit to the lava gods. Follow your prey into a teleporter and hope for the splat of a successful tele-frag.
- Scavenge for frags. If you happen upon a firefight in progress, hang back and pick off the survivors. We affectionately call these buzzard kills, but hey, a frag is a frag. Or better yet, don't even bother waiting for survivors; go for all the frags by lobbing in a generous helping of fireworks.
- Use the mouse the controller of choice by everyone at id Software. Although the keyboard is easier to learn initially, the mouse lets you perform advanced maneuvers and use mouselock (the ability to look in all directions fluidly).
- Practice, practice, practice! 'Nuff said.

Match mastery: Proficiency with the mouse maximizes your potential to shoot accurately while evading enemy fire.

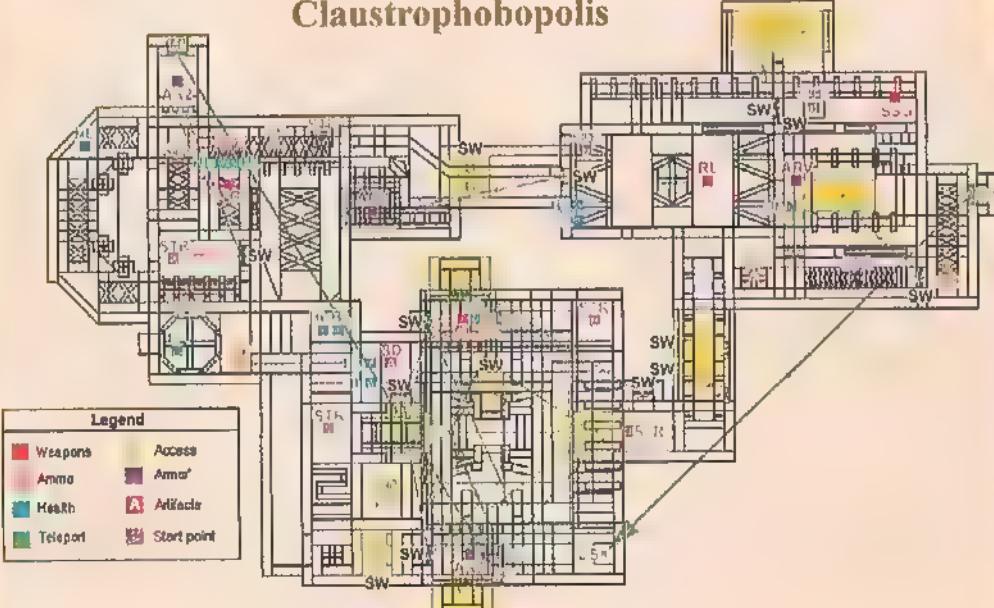
"Circle-strafing" (circling around a target while shooting it) is the fundamental maneuver—all DeathMatch experts excel at it. It's not too difficult to learn: Point your gun at the target, sidestep (using keys) in one direction, and turn (using the mouse) in the other direction to keep on target. For example, to circle right, you sidestep right while turning left. Properly executed, this maneuver lets you sweep around the target faster than he can turn to snap off a good shot at you.

Tim Willits, an id level designer and cutthroat DeathMatcher, has his own variation, which I call the "broken circle-strafe." It's a circle-strafe made up of approximately four or five abrupt stop-and-go arcs. Willits accomplishes this by using the default DOOM mouse configuration (mouse button 3 = strafe). It keeps his left hand free for sandwiches and is deadly enough to get him called various foul names during DeathMatches at id.

The key to circle-strafing is properly coordinating the turn with the sidestep.

Weapons	
NG	Nailgun
SNG	Super Nailgun
SSC	Super Shotgun
GL	Grenade Launcher
RL	Rocket Launcher
LI	Lightning
Ammo	
LG	
RK	Rockets
SP	Spins
SG	Shotgun Shells
Health	
HL	Health
Teleport	
DS	Destination
TP	Teleport
Access	
DR	Door
SDR	Secret Door
SW	Switch
WV	Walkway
Armor	
AR	Armor
ARI	Armor 1
AR2	Armor 2
ARIV	Armor Inv
Artifacts	
IVS	Invisibility
INV	Invisibility
SD	Super Damage
Start Point	
STR	Start Point

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The degree to which you turn with the mouse controls the radius of your circle around the target. The faster you turn in

relation to your sidestepping, the tighter your circle ("decreasing-radius circle-strafe"); the slower, the more open ("increasing-radius circle-strafe"). Make adjustments to

your circle by integrating forward movement to bring you closer to the kill and by backpedaling to put some distance between you and the target.

"Whip turn" gets you

around obstructions with an extremely sharp turn. To do this, you turn and sidestep in the same direction at the same time. It's used much less often than the circle-strafe and variations, but it's always a handy way to keep your moves from becoming too predictable. You can also toss in jumps to make your motion appear even more erratic.

"Fly-by," also called "joust," is devastating both in narrow corridors and open areas. Although it looks like a jousting run

Mouse users don't actually use just the mouse. It's most accurate to say they use a combination of mouse and keyboard. I find it easiest to divide their functions roughly into fire-and-movement, where the mouse controls aiming and shooting, and propulsion, where the keys are used

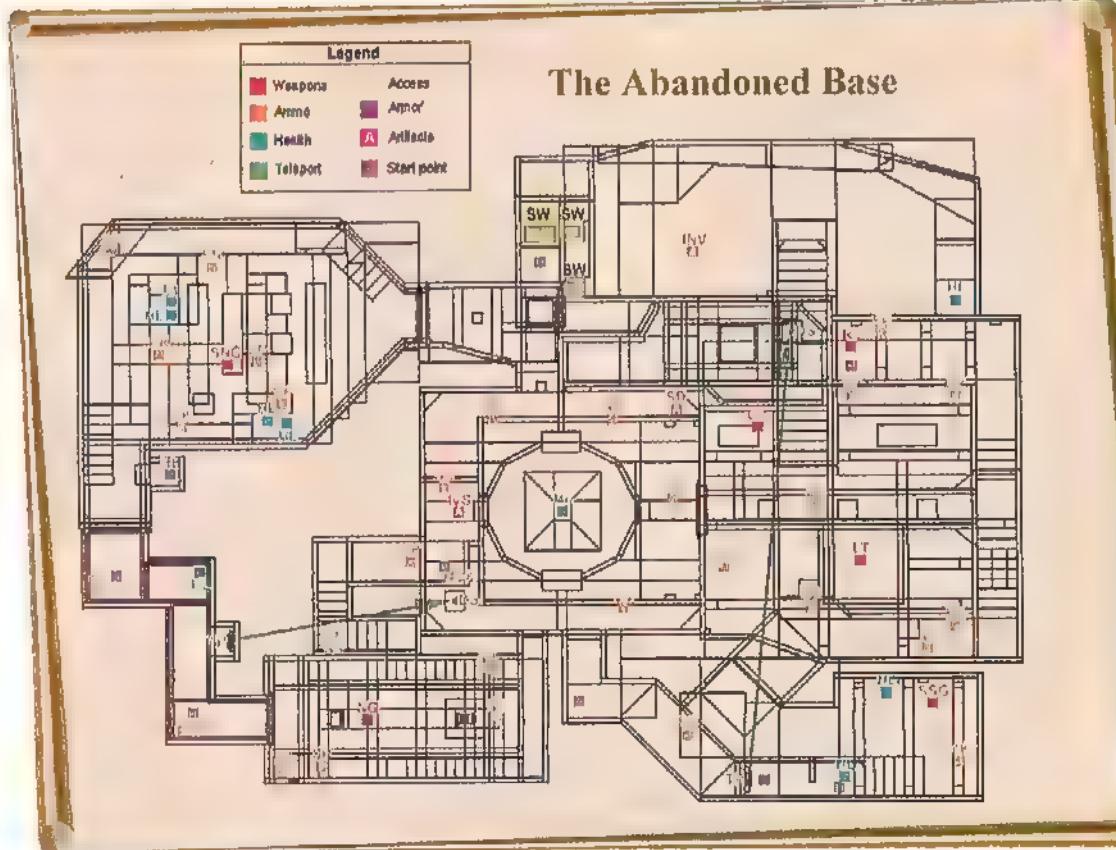
Although three-button mice are superior, the sad fact is that their two-button brethren outnumber them overwhelmingly. Because I'm such a promiscuous computer user, never knowing which PC I'll be on next, I've designed my personalized configuration for the more common two-button mouse. (Most people find the default configuration comfortable enough though.) Here's the setup I use:

- Mouse button 1-attack
- Mouse button 2-mouselook
- E-forward (left middle finger)
- D-backward (left middle finger)
- S-sidestep left (left ring finger)
- F-sidestep right (left index finger)
- Spacebar-jump (left thumb)

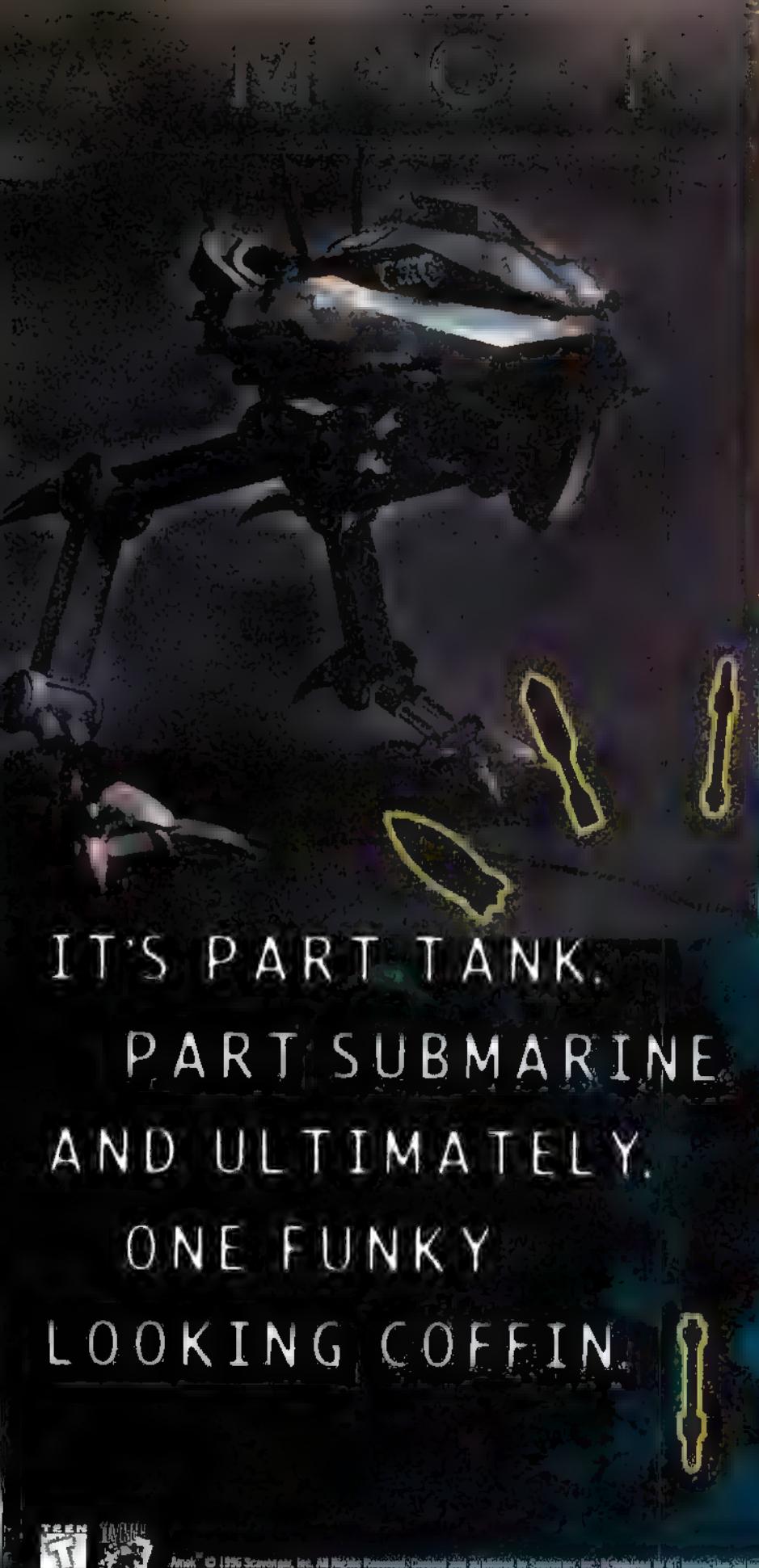


► POWER OUTAGE Nothing lights up my evenings like a prolonged zap or three. Look at that delicious spray of giblets.

Weapons	
NB	Naigun
SNG	Super Naigun
SSG	Super Shotgun
GL	Grenade Launcher
RL	Rocket Launcher
LT	Lightning
Ammo	
CL	Cells
RK	Rockets
SP	Spikes
SS	Shotgun Shells
Health	
HL	Health
Teleport	
DS	Destination
TP	Teleport
Access	
DR	Door
SDR	Secret Door
SW	Switch
WW	Walkway
Armor	
AR	Armor
AR1	Armor 1
AR2	Armor 2
ARIV	Armor Inv
Artifacts	
IVS	Invisibility
INV	Inulnerability
SD	Super Damage
Start Point	
STA	Start Point



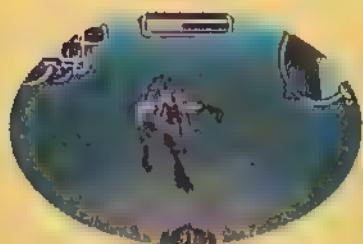
The Abandoned Base



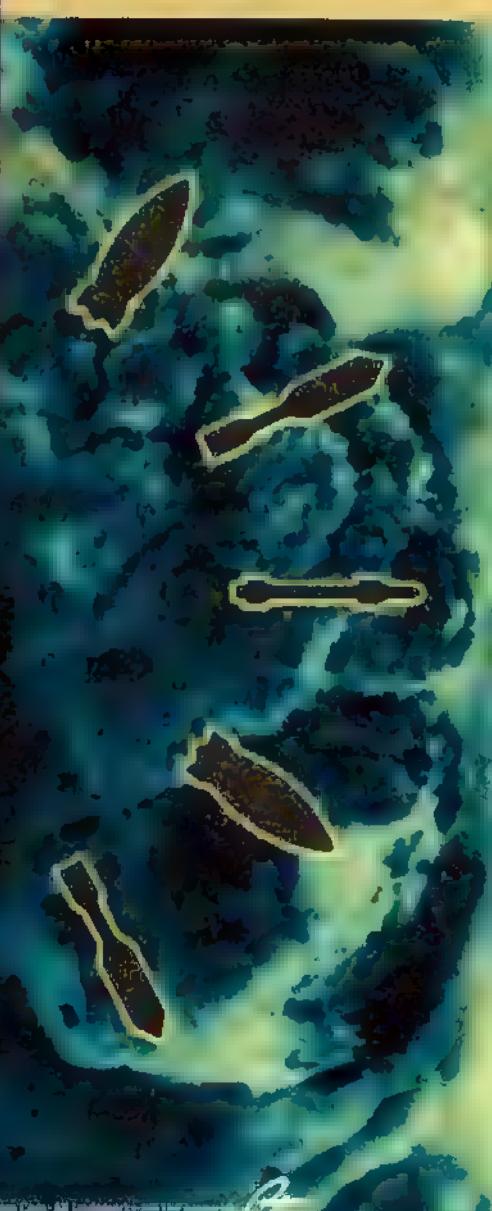
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PART SUBMARINE
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NOT ALL GUNS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Face it: You love firepower, but in Quake, the biggest gun isn't always the best. Select your weapon wisely, or you're doomed.

Many players gravitate to the Nailgun and the Perforator (aka Super Nailgun) for the tremendous rate of fire. The garden-hose effect of flying nails makes deflection shooting much easier. The spike-shooters work best on evasive or fast-moving targets up to midrange.

Rockets and grenades inflict tremendous damage and will injure anyone within their blast radius. Although using combat rockets in close quarters is often suicidal, these puppies are great for long-distance sniping. Be sure to hit the F11 key for the handy Zoom In feature. (Note that the rocket's exhaust trail gives away your position.)

The grenade launcher is arguably the trickiest weapon to handle, but because the pineapples detonate immediately on direct contact with humans, developing an accurate grenade toss will earn you lots of respect as well as frags. The grenade launcher is also very handy for bouncing ordnance around corners and clearing small rooms. Bounce pineapples off corridor walls so they land behind you, or toss some off lifts as you're going up. The id programmers call this



"leaving a gift."

The Thunderbolt is the crown jewel of the QUAKE arsenal. Nothing is quite as spectacular as a jagged bolt of lightning toasting all flesh in its path. Swing it side to side and everyone inside its arc gets a searing jolt. Note that the Thunderbolt has a limited range, and it can kill you if you discharge it while you're submerged. The only times you should consider pulling the trigger underwater are when you have the Pentagram of Protection or you will rack up multiple frags—or both.

Many players mistakenly shun the boomsticks. Keep this in mind: In QUAKE, both the single- and double-barrel scatterguns deliver their loads of buckshot *instantly*. Nails and rockets don't. Plus, either shotgun packs an explosive punch when you're amped on the Quad Damage power-up.

And never, never ignore the ax! I've taken a surprising number of heads with this trusty tool. It's deadliest when you can pin a stunned victim into a corner and take solid whacks. There's no recoil to knock you away from the target, so you spend more time chopping and less time chasing.

(passing close enough to touch shoulders), the fly-by is actually a stretched decreasing-radius circle-strafe followed immediately by an equally stretched

increasing-radius circle-strafe. This lets you keep your gun on target throughout the entire pass.

I use the fly-by for terrifying less-

experienced players. For many players, the natural reaction is to pivot to line up the crosshairs—generally a fatal mistake, because then they're sitting ducks when I

Weapons	
NG	Nailgun
SNG	Super Nailgun
SSG	Super Shotgun
GL	Grenade Launcher
RL	Rocket Launcher
LT	Lightning

Ammo	
CL	Cells
RK	Rockets
SP	Spiques
SS	Shotgun Shells

Health	
HL	Health

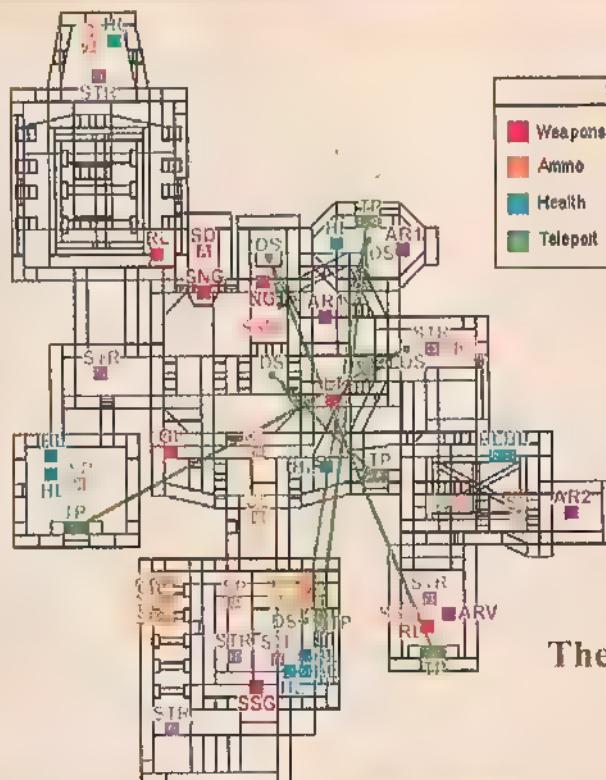
Teleport	
DS	Destination
TP	Teleport

Access	
DR	Door
SDR	Secret Door
SW	Switch
WW	Walkway

Armor	
AR	Armor
AR1	Armor 1
AR2	Armor 2
ARV	Armor Inv

Artifacts	
IVS	Invisibility
INV	Invulnerability
SD	Super Damage

Start Point	
STR	Start Point



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immediately return for seconds.

Although it's best to finish off your frags one at a time, the chaos that permeates DeathMatch frequently makes it necessary to take on multiple adversaries. A

combo good for taking two targets is "Mobius strafe," which looks like a figure eight encircling the two targets. It consists of circle-strafing one player until you reach a point between him and the other



CRANIAL CUCARACHA The House of Chthon is a great level for jumping onto an opponent's head, aiming straight down and administering a terminal migraine.

player, where you suddenly over-rotate your turn by about 180 degrees and begin a circle-strafe in the opposite direction.

My favorite mouse maneuver is also the most obnoxious—and therefore gratifying—way to slap another player across the face. If someone is hot on your tail, flip an "up yours." Spin 180 degrees as you cease forward motion, and then run backward with both barrels up your surprised pursuer's nostrils. It instantly morphs their moment of imminent glory into a humiliating spanking.

GOING OVER THE EDGE

These fancy moves deserve equally extreme tactics. Some hardcore veterans use the "rocket assist" for super-high jumps to reach goodies or prime sniper positions. Simply run forward, look down at your feet, jump, and then launch a rocket into the ground directly beneath you. Definitely make sure you have enough health and armor to survive this

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stunt—either the Mega Health or Pentagram of Protection power-ups will do nicely.

A brutal tactic I like to use—which John Cash, id's "network guy" and a top-flight DeathMatcher, calls the "Hug of Death"—comes in handy when you're near death and refuse to flee from someone bent on blowing you away with explosives. Charge the attacker and hope for a point-blank blast that incinerates him as well. It's almost as satisfying as dispatching someone when you're down to only two percent health.

My absolute favorite is something I call the "SkullCracker." According to Cash, the id boys love this one, especially on the House of Clifton level. If someone is in a corner, leap onto his head, stand there as he wonders where you went, and then blast loads of buckshot straight down into the victim's brainpan. The poor soul generally doesn't realize what's going on until he crumples to the



I'M THE AXE MAN The axe has three good qualities: it won't push your enemy away, it won't flash like a gun and reveal your position, and it is the best weapon for humiliating your friends.

ground and you're doing a jig on his corpse.

Don't worry if none of these pointers feel comfortable for your style of play. As you improve your DeathMatch skills,

you'll find yourself unconsciously incorporating many of them anyway. Besides, the only true rule is to have fun, and in Quake: DeathMatch, that's expressed in the official mantra: Kill 'em all! ☺

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A collage of Iron Man and Captain America in their respective armors. Iron Man's red and gold suit is on the left, showing his face and chest. Captain America's blue and white suit is on the right, also showing his face and chest. They appear to be in a dynamic pose, possibly fighting or facing each other.

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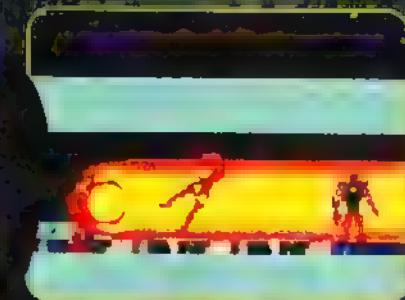
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The bad news is, your uncle was one twisted son of a bitch.



ONCE UPON A TIME



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9

G
GIGI Interactive Software



Pawn to Infinity



ChessMASTER 5000 Makes Its Move

Throughout the past decade, Chess programs have found clever ways to be competitive. Sargon assigned string variables to squares, a creative way of differentiating their importance. BATTLE CHESS brought animation and a sense of humor to the genre (see this month's Hall of Fame, on pg. 232). And every other month, it seems as though some new chess program proclaims itself as the strongest of all time, with the greatest number of features. "See our unparalleled Chess database, with all 2700 games from the match between the Caliph of Baghdad and Marco Polo plus the Chosen Ones versus the Infidels' classic tournament of 1160." Amidst this increasingly cutthroat competition, the CHESSMASTER series has

been an oasis of quality, selling over one million copies. When you consider the excellent tutorials, tough Chess problems and many and varied computer opponents that CM4000 boasted—what could be left for this new version? A lot, actually.

"KASPAROV IS LOWER THAN A DOG." —BOBBY FISCHER, 1993

CM5000's Chess engine is now 32-bit and optimized for stronger play when using any Pentium chip. Yet with the more



IS IT MY MOVE? Dream match-ups can be recreated easily—imagine the calm Morphy versus the fiery Alekhine, with Fischer time controls.

Mindscape has rather ambitious plans to bring CHESSMASTER 5000 online, and part of this scheme is already up and running. Anyone who enjoys a bit of pawn-pushing should visit <http://www.chessmasternetwork.com>, which (if you can manage to type it in correctly) is one of the best gaming Web sites we've seen. California State Chess champion and National Master Curt Schilling is a frequent contributor, as is the



powerful engine comes a welcome increase in the number of low-to-medium range opponents for average players. These opponents—Moderate, Light, Easy, Kamikaze and other boring but descriptive names—play a lot like the rank-and-file players you tend to meet in weekend Chess tournaments. They can sometimes come up with near-brilliant combinations, then lose their way in moderately difficult Rook ending. These mid-level opponents offer a good starting point—better than consistently losing to expert players and getting demoralized.

CM5000's greatest attribute, though, is the variety of computer opponents based on styles of Grandmasters past and present. Here, you can see how that never-played match between the classic style of Fischer and the bold, adventurous play of Kasparov might really turn out, or simply pit your own style against "Spassky" or "Karpov." Over 70 GM styles are included, from the eccentric Bird to the nervous Nimzovitch, with the opening books for each specifically tuned to accentuate that player's particular style. Adolf Anderssen's Illar is unmistakable, as he attempts to ensnare your pieces in wild, attacking King's Gambits. Capablanca elegantly simplifies to a superior endgame, while Alekhine tries to complicate even the

“ CM5000 is simply the best program ever designed for the mainstream chess player. ”

C TIPS!

To improve your play isn't simply to play lightning-speed chess. But there's an exception: play "Dr. Pepper" Chess of "10-2-4" instead. Give yourself 10 minutes for the entire game, and a stronger computer opponent only 2 minutes, then play a four-game match, alternating colors. Save your games and use the CM5000 auto-annotator feature to find flaws and improve your play. When you reach the

point where you're winning the majority of these games, give yourself only 5 minutes—until you can tackle the computer on an equal-time footing. Then move on to a tougher opponent.

If you're having trouble making headway against the Grandmaster personalities, try turning off the computer's opening book. Warning: This will not work as well against the Morphy or Capablanca styles, which depend more on natural moves than hard-coded "memorization."

If you've taken the full install option, it isn't strictly necessary to have the CD-ROM in the drive to play a game. But the program does check for the CD before loading, so that you can use the opening library editor, etc. If you have another CD, such as an audio CD, in the drive, the program won't load. So wait to load your "Ferranti & Teicher's 10 Great Chess Themes" until after you've launched CM5000. You really need at least a Pentium 90 to get the full use of the program, and we recommend at least 16 MB of RAM.

most quiet position, Morphy's pieces seem to effortlessly find just the right squares to maximize their mobility. Fischer, it seems, does everything well.

If you somehow manage to tire of these opponents (more than six dozen), you can design your own, adjusting such attributes as playing strength, mobility, control of the center, King safety, and how the computer player values each piece. Advanced players will find that while the GM styles may lack the endgame savvy of a real-life Fischer or Capablanca, the endgame AI is improved over that of CM4000.

MY RATING IS WHAT?

One of the few weaknesses in CM5000 is the rating system for human players. You can play game after game against quality competition, yet the only way the program rates your progress is in how you match moves from classic GM games in a quiz format. If you were a poor student, but knew Capablanca's games, you would be rated higher by the computer than you deserve—setting you up for some disappointment in live play against a correctly rated human.

On the plus side, the tutorials are much improved over CM4000; they form a library of sorts that takes you from the simplest rules of Chess to intermediate concepts such as open files and the importance of the 7th rank. Passed pawns, pawn structure and weak versus strong squares, in particular, are explained in concise, clear language—a big departure from most Chess books, let alone Chess software. CM John Nunn chimes in with his favorite Chess problems, and CM Yasser

Seimwan—the only American player in the last 20 years to qualify for the Candidates' pre-world championship cycle—discusses advanced tactical and strategic themes, then illustrates them

use—tense stuff, indeed.

In the end, there's little to find fault with in CM5000. Your favorite GM isn't included? Recreate his style with the handy editor. Tired of sparring with the computer? Play a human over network, modem or Internet—all are supported. Sure, the MIDI tunes could stand improvement, and CM5000 isn't likely to take out Kasparov anytime soon. Then again, Big Blue didn't fare so well against Garry, either. Maybe there's hope for all of us Chess-playing humans—especially when we can improve with quality software like CM5000. S



SNAP THE STALK CM 5000 lets you practice against odd repertoires, such as the Corn Stalk and Fred openings. Once you find ways to exploit weak opening play like this, your entire game will improve.

with the 1993 Game of the Year between Kasparov and Karpov. Simply wonderful stuff for any level of chessplayer.

FATHER TIME COMES CALLING

As expected, CM5000 supports a number of stunning Chess sets and boards, with the true-perspective view coming very close to that of a physical board and pieces. Still, it's the gameplay functions that outshine the chrome. Time controls, for example, can be set for the usual moves/minute, moves/game, total time/game, or you can use the new Fischer clock, which adds 3 seconds for each move you make. Alternatively, you can play "hourglass," where the less time your opponent uses, the less you have to

This is Terry Coleman's farewell Classics & Puzzles column, as he hands the reins over to longtime CGW contributing editor Charles Ardai. Terry's opinions may still be found in the Strategy/Wargames column each month.

APPEAL: Anyone who loves Chess.

PROS: Wonderful tutorials, luscious graphics and the best array of computer opponents in the business, plus multiplayer support.

CONS: The MIDI music is lackluster. It would be nice to see a realistic rating system.



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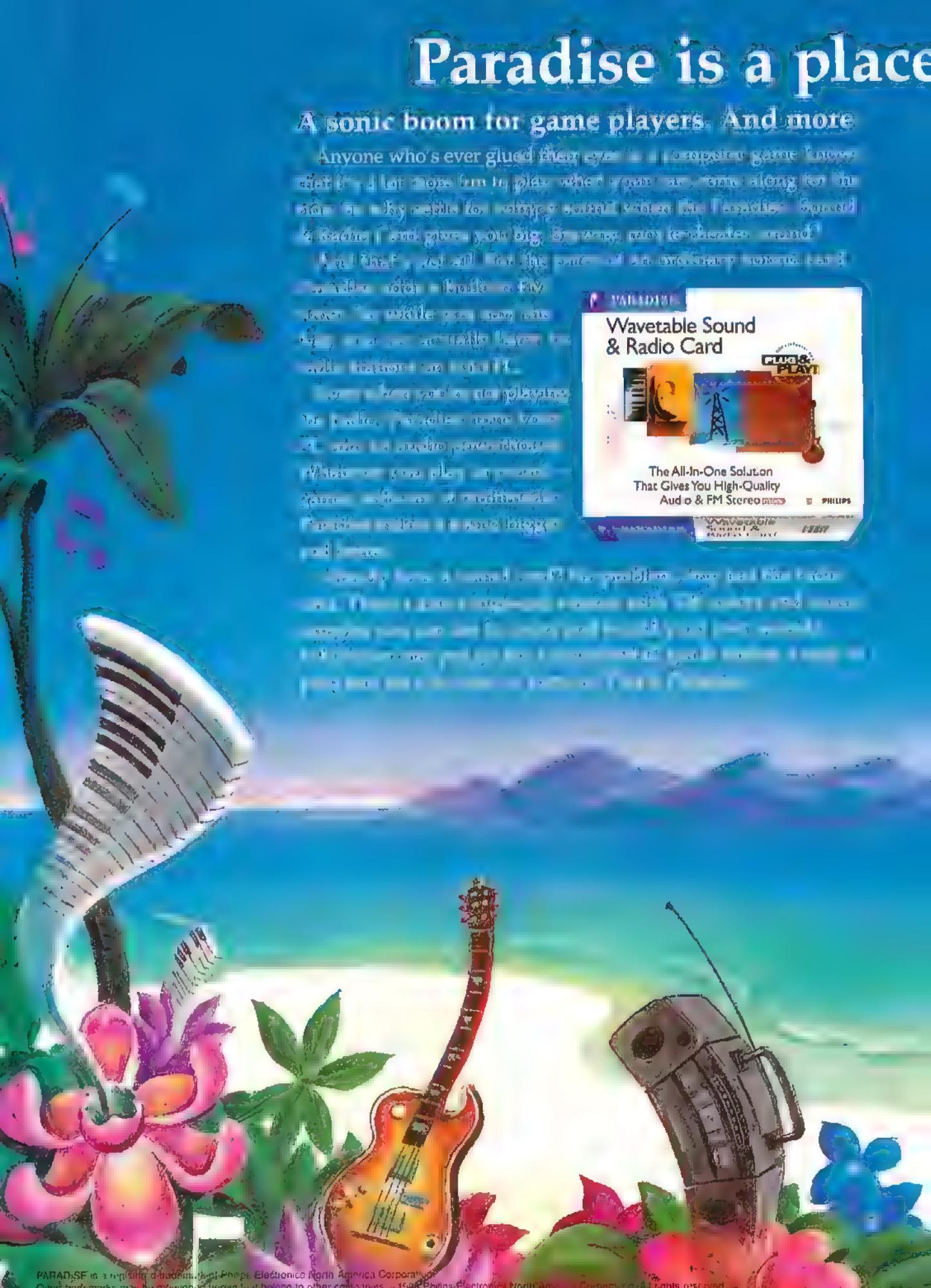
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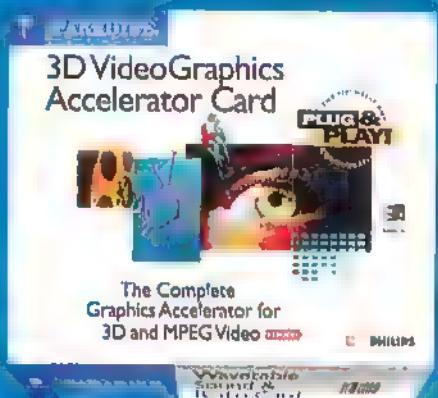
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Still Life With Trill

Treasure Quest Is No Charmer In The Dell Puzzlebook Tradition

by Arinn Dembo

There's an old saying: "Everyone is always complaining about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it." Likewise,

everyone's always saying that they want to see something new in computer gaming, but how often do we get a product we've never seen before? It isn't just that the industry uses the same basic plots over and over again, and it isn't just that the same themes are constantly recycled. The real issue is that virtually any game you see on the shelf is part of some prior tradition; it's very rare to see a whole new type of game, one that doesn't fit into any known category.

TREASURE QUEST genuinely tries to be a new breed of cat, both in game design and in public relations, with its "Solve the Mystery, Win One Million Dollars" slogan. Even those of us who wouldn't ordinarily be interested in a "multimedia mystery challenge" might have found the idea attractive. Those still unsure might be enticed by the lovely "host," Terry Farrell—better known as Lieutenant Dax on *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*. Despite this dubious chrome, however, TREASURE QUEST doesn't have much to offer.

LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH

So, what exactly is a "multimedia mystery challenge"? Well, if you've ever sat down on a computer train with the latest



Price: \$49.99

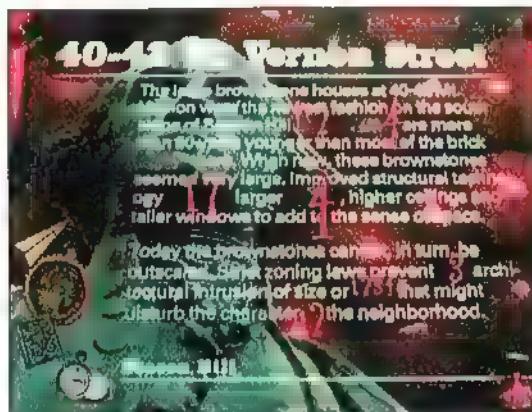
System

Requirements: IBM compatible 486-33 or better, 8 MB RAM, 10 MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or better, 2x CD-ROM, Sound Blaster-compatible sound card

Protection: None (CD must be in drive) **Designer:** Soggy In Seattle

Publisher: Sirius Publishing Scottsdale, AZ (602) 951-3288

Reader Service #: 319



I HATE GEOMETRIC PROOFS It isn't enough to have the answer. To win the prize, you have to show your work!

book of Dell pencil puzzles and a ball-point pen, and you suddenly found yourself thinking, "Hey! What this really needs is a CD-ROM version!" Then TREASURE QUEST might briefly hold your attention. Clicking through this game is much like flipping through a puzzle book. As you pass from screen to screen, you encounter all the classics of the genre: cryptograms, word searches, riddles, puns, fill-in-the-blanks, obscure hints.

The premise here is that you are a student of linguistics. Your favorite professor, Jonathan William Faulkner, has just died, and he's turned his house into a giant enigma. His entire fortune—a million dollars—will go to the person who solves said enigma. There are 10 rooms in the mansion, and each of them has been carefully arranged to suggest a quotation, not necessarily a famous one.

just a meaningful sentence or phrase. Every object, every sound, every strain of music is a clue. When you have discovered the quotations for all 10 rooms, you may be able to solve the final mystery of the game, which probably has something to do with the one puzzle that the professor was never able to solve in life: that is, who murdered his lover, many years ago, and why?

In the course of "solving the mystery," you are asked to unravel seemingly endless screens of audiovisual encryption, each scrambled message more incomprehensible than the last. You begin the game in the professor's den. As you progress, you find hotspots that access the other rooms of the house. Every screen is a collage of clues to some puzzle or another. The rooms are not rendered in three dimensions; they aren't like the rooms or screens of a standard computer game, which capture a sense of space. Instead, each room is a landscape of ideas, with photographs, quotations, words and puzzles all pasted



LAX DAX The advice from Terry Farrell isn't helpful, and her fans probably already have better shots of her downloaded from the Internet.

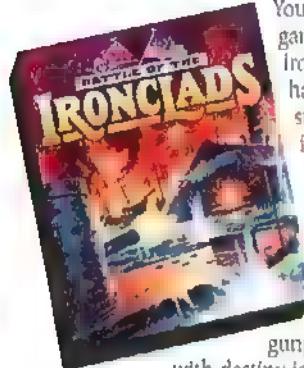
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View From The Monitor



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If you think the "Official Guide" might shed some light on the million-dollar prize, think again. For your \$20 you get: 31 pages of lyrics and music to the songs on the soundtrack, and a list of songs by room; 9 pages of background on "the Professor's lost love"; 14 pages of Terry Farrell's "spirit guide" dialogue; 26 pages of audio clues with screenshots; 5 pages on how to use Win 95's screen capture utility to make "maps" of each room; 7 pages of information on Sinus Publishing's Internet access service; 17 pages on the video utility that comes with TREASURE QUEST—all in only 158 pages!

Given the overall snake-oil flavor of the *Treasure Quest* experience, I wasn't surprised that the "Resource Guide" was 20 bucks' worth of hot air. What did surprise me, was that the book was authored by Steve Schwartz, a seasoned professional in the field, and that it was put out by Prima



Publishing—which supplies hint books for many good computer games. I expected better from them.

Only 24 of the pages are genuinely useful. Pages 40 to 64 partially solve one of TREASURE QUEST's puzzles, give some explanation of how the game works, and provide paper copies of some (but not all!) of the game's pencil puzzles. If the whole book had been like this, and if Prima had printed each of the game's puzzles and clues, the guide would be helpful. We all understand that you can't just give us a walk-through—there is a million dollars involved. As it stands, however, this \$20 white elephant just adds insult to injury; with so little new to offer, it could have been a lot cheaper.

If you can't get a refund, and you're determined to finish TREASURE QUEST at any cost, this book might help. Personally, I think that a Viking funeral for the game and all associated materials would be more therapeutic.

on top of one another.

It's possible that this idea could have been made at least mildly amusing by a team of good, professional game designers. Yet TREASURE QUEST is just another tedious experiment in multimedia, filled with sound bites and brief, noninteractive walk-ons from Terry Farrell. Your only option is to click through the screens, looking for hotspots that allow you to move on to other screens, and occasionally type in the solution to a puzzle. Playing this game takes a lot of work with a pencil and paper. There are several word searches and cryptograms, and you have to copy each one,



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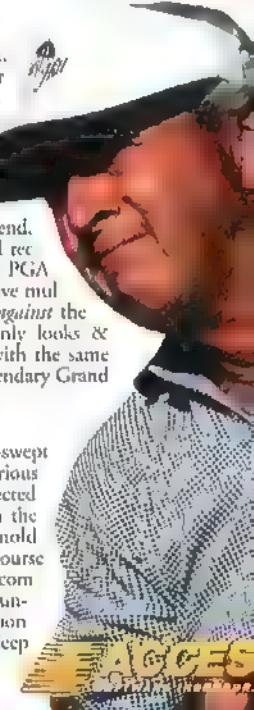
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MULTIMEDIocre It's ludicrous to have puzzles on CD-ROM that you must use a pen and paper to solve

because you don't get the chance to work with them on the screen. You can't use the cursor to circle words on a word search or copy a cryptogram to the game's "notebook" so that you can fiddle with it. There are no puzzles that involve the manipulation of objects. Your mouse is nothing but a page-turning device. You have to work even to turn the pages, the

cursor doesn't change when you pass over a hotspot. You have to click at random to find each one. Thus, this CD-ROM is actually *inferior* to a puzzle book—you can't write in it or turn the pages freely. It's look-but-don't-touch multimedia, the very worst kind.

TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

The only thing that this game has going for it is the cash prize, and even that's marred by

four pages' worth of rules and conditions. You see, "solving the mystery" of this game doesn't involve just writing down the quote for each room and the final solution. You also have to turn in an essay of 1,000 words, minimum, explaining how you derived your solutions from the available clues. Furthermore, in the event of a tie—if two people turn in the correct solu-

tions by certified mail on the same day—the tie will be broken by grading the respective essays for content, deductive reasoning and intuitiveness.

If you're just looking for entertainment, you may want to take your quest elsewhere; this hybrid of computer gaming and puzzle book traditions is sterile—far more successful as an experiment in marketing than as a game. TREASURE QUEST is a real novelty, all right—and playing it is enough to turn anyone into a born-again conservative. ☺

PAPPEAL: For Dell Pencil
Puzzlebook fans with immense
patience.

PROS: Lots of
pretty pictures, and
it didn't crash.

CONS: About as
much fun as mak-
ing paint dry by
blowing on it
through a straw...



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The Cast Enjoy the difference Hollywood cinematography, acting, editing, stunt work, music, and direction make as the world of Tex Murphy becomes amazingly real. Starring Barry Corbin (*Northern Exposure*, *War Games*), Tanya Roberts (*View to a Kill*, *Bearmaster*), Kevin McCarthy (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Just Cause*), and Chris Jones (*Under a Killing Moon*, *Martian Memorandum*, *Mean Streets*) as Tex Murphy. Directed by Adrian Carr (*Quigly Down Under*, *Man from Snowy River*, *The Power Rangers*). Original music by Richie Havens and Nicole Lindall. For more info, call 1-800-800-4880.





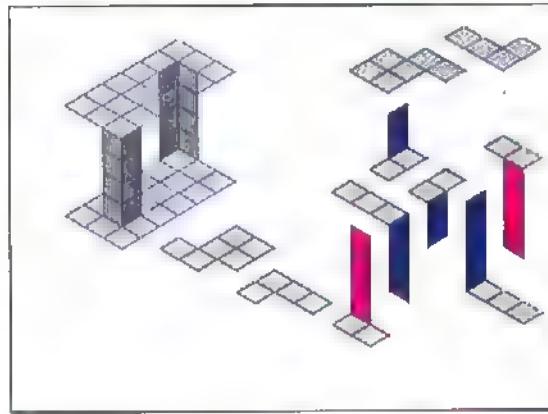
Escher-A-Sketch

Escher's Work Confounds And Delights On New CD-ROM

by Allen L. Greenberg

The works of M. C. Escher stand firmly at the intersection of art and science, and it is precisely this tension that *ESCHER INTERACTIVE: ART OF THE INFINITE* explores. This is no screen-saver, and puzzle fanatics will find a hidden treasure here amidst the artistic displays and curios.

Escher has been infinitely popular in the United States since his work was introduced by both *Time* and *Life* magazines in 1951. His familiar, eye-catching lithographs and drawings have easily found their way into the human collective conscious (and subconscious). Arguably the most popular of Escher's works are his "tessellations," or mosaics, in which a plane is divided into metamorphosing,



► **LEANING TOWERS** Only Escher could take something so simple as a pair of columns and transform them into an interesting perspective puzzle.

examined in magnification to the full extent of the program's resolution. Other designs have been disassembled into blocks, forming puzzles that are clearly

impossible to reassemble, at least in this universe.

PATENTED PATTERNS

Breaking down certain patterns, it is possible to watch individual pieces make their fascinating transformations. There are so many patterns upon which the artist has worked his magic that the

selection of pieces is quite impressive. Finally, you are invited to audaciously take hold of the pieces, as though you were using a drawing program, and subject them to transformation or mutilation. The resultant mutation may then be printed out as proof that nothing is eternal.

One of the program's hidden challenges is being able to interpret perspective. There are some "magic" pictures in

which the user is encouraged to find the three-dimensional figure hiding amid other details.

Finally, there is also a brilliant little puzzle game in that the user must decide whether a surface is convex or concave, based on other objects which may be resting on it, in it or attached to it. It's not at all an easy

task, and there is more than one level of difficulty. A time limit increases the pressure as you decide whether you are staring at an outer wall or the inside of a cube. Can you then lean a ladder against it? Or hang a fixture from a wall? Perhaps the images are completely incompatible!

Escher's life, history and background are covered, as well, with use of video and narration, just to complete the presentation. Anyone who appreciates the artist's work will enjoy *ESCHER INTERACTIVE*, as will those with an eye for the unusual. Think of it as a stroll through an imaginary and interactive Escher museum. ■



Price: \$39.99
System

Requirements: IBM 486-66 or better processor, 8 MB RAM, Windows 3.1 or better, 1 MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM, Windows-compatible sound card, mouse.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: Eyeware Interactive

Publisher: Byron Preiss Multimedia
New York, NY
(212) 989-6252

Reader Service #: 320



► **VEXED & CONVEXED** Determining concave/convex relationships—an Escher trademark—is even more difficult under time pressure.

interlocking figurative shapes. There are also his absurd realizations of impossible views linked together into one scene, such as staircases that both descend and ascend at the same time.

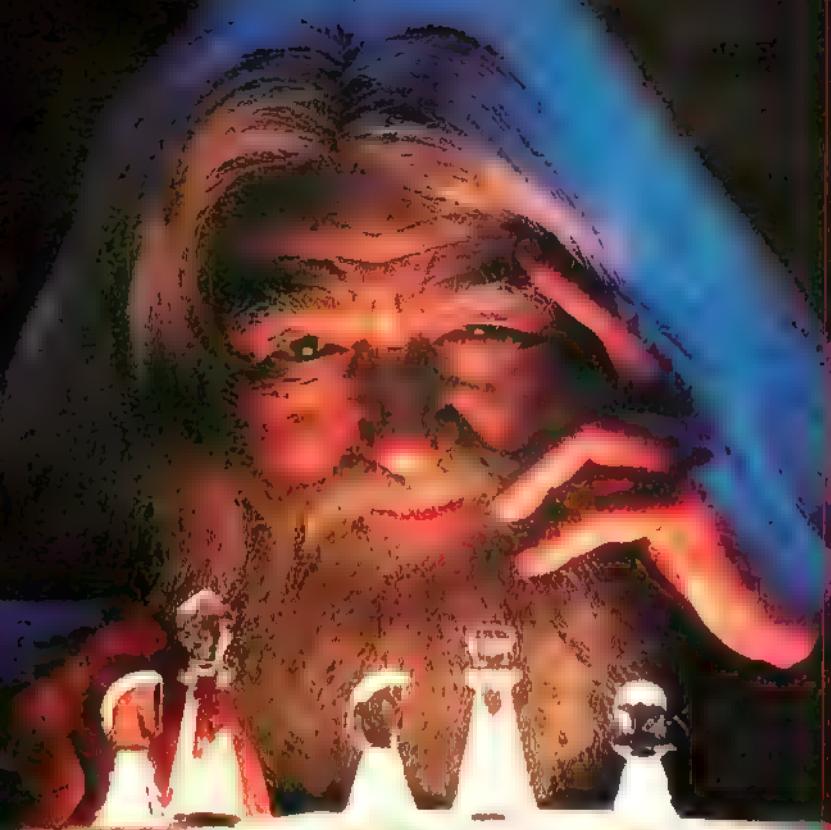
ESCHER INTERACTIVE presents a wonderful overview, with over 600 samples of the artist's work—many of which include recorded comments by Escher himself. Certain "spherical" drawings may be

► **APPEAL:** Anyone fascinated by Escher's genius will find plenty of entertainment value here.

► **PROS:** Escher's works are displayed with style, and the puzzle game is nicely integrated into the presentation. The best multimedia product yet from Byron Preiss.

► **CONS:** Even with Escher's own comments, the treatment has trouble keeping up with the deep art; many drawings and lithographs are displayed with no background.





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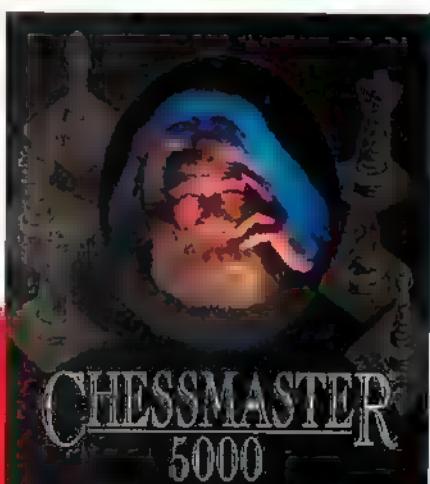
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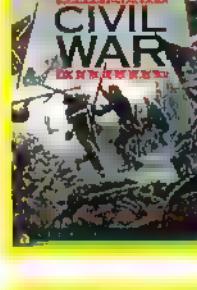
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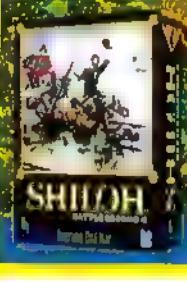
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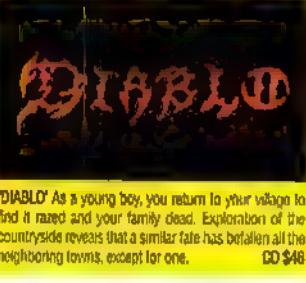
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Circle Reader Service #87

Gentlemen, Start Your Modems

Race With A Fast Crowd In Online, Multiplayer NASCAR RACING



ever waste time on your computer? I do. In fact, it seems I wasted an entire decade of sports gaming playing ho-hum games like

baseball, football, basketball and ice hockey. Just recently, though, I was reborn. The blessed event took place at about 190 MPH on the steep-banked curves of Talladega Super Speedway. I was driving in Papyrus Software's NASCAR RACING LiACUT prototype, which is an online, multiplayer competition. This ambitious project is code-named Hawaii, perhaps



EAT MY DUST The NASCAR RACING LEAGUE prototype lets you race head-to-head with up to 35 would-be Richard Petty's on NASCAR RACING courses.

because it's a sim driver's paradise. Believe me, it's the most fun you can have in a car with your hands still on the steering wheel.

Shaq be in a Lakers or Magic uniform?

Virgin Interactive Entertainment is also riding on the 3D motion-capture sports bandwagon with its upcoming GRAND SLAM '96. This baseball title is said to include unlimited camera angles, pitching and batting meters, and—here's an ominous one—commentators "loaded with personality." We'll see what kind of load they're talking about when it's released in the fall.

ON DECK

EA Sports is working on the follow-up to NBA Live '96, and this looks to be a major upgrade graphic-wise. NBA LIVE '97 will purportedly include 3D motion-captured moves from Sacramento King's All-Star Mitch Richmond and Tyus Edney, as well as Golden State Warrior's 1995 #1 draft pick Joe Smith. EA is shooting for a release to coincide with the start of the new NBA season. The \$55 Million Dollar Question: Will



My past ignorance of racing? It could be a cultural thing. Growing up in an urban area north of the Mason-Dixon Line, I never had much exposure to motor sports. In fact, I sort of turned my nose up at the whole NASCAR scene, seeing it as mindless fun for *Dukes of Hazzard* types. Boy was I wrong. In fact, with a voracious appetite for gaming, I'd played just about every type of computer entertainment product on the market, except for auto racing sims. Finally, while evaluating a steering wheel controller for CGW last year, I gave INDY CAR RACING a test drive. Like so many before me had discovered, the adrenaline rush of big-time virtual racing is instantly addictive. When I found out there was a place where I could go head-to-head with up to 35 other speed freaks, I just had to experience it for myself.

LAP DOGS

Logging onto Hawaii, the first stop is the Race Scheduler. This screen recaps the races that are forming up, as well as the status of those in progress. The key points to note here are the truck, the race

"Papyrus'
Hawaii is a
sim driver's
paradise."

length and the skill level. Want some free advice? Don't sign up for a race at an unfamiliar speedway. At best you'll be cabing the dust of the leaders. At worst your car will end up in little pieces. Keep an eye on the length of the race, too. Most are set up for either 5 or 10 percent of actual course laps. Occasionally, however, an ambitious driver may propose an even longer race. The choice is yours, but the additional laps can be tedious if you drop behind. Most important is the skill setting. Newbies start I Hawaii at Level 0, and work their way up with solid outings. The game won't permit players to enter races beyond their abilities, but open races usually show wide deviation in driver skill levels.

Anyone logged onto the system can "nominate" a race. Players who've signed up for an event wait in a chat room until sufficient slots are filled. I Hawaii then automatically fires up the copy of NASCAR on your system, and drivers go through the usual practice and qualification stages. Warm-ups are abbreviated, however, lasting only long enough for last-minute adjustments before the cars move to the starting line. At the discretion of the individual who initiated the race, there may or may not be a pace lap. NASCAR purists tend to insist on one, while Type-A drivers prefer a quick green flag.

The I Hawaii server supports every track included on NASCAR and the Track Pack expansion kit, but gamers are only

CTIPS!

Like Colorado's Coors Field, **HARDBALL 5** is a batter's paradise. Would-be Nolan Ryans playing the game should try the following strategies to improve their stuff ►Before pitching to each batter, view the back of the player's card by hitting the Backspace button twice, and then check out the batter's contact and power ratings. If the batter has low contact ratings and high power ratings you are

permitted to me on courses already installed on their home systems. Judging from a recent weekend I surrendered to the Hawaii prototype, I Hawaii and Atlanta seem to be the most popular speedway choices. Dega, of course, appeals to speed demons, since you never have to take your foot off the gas. Not quite as fast, Atlanta nonetheless offers a challenging 1.5 mile course.

I Hawaii is a great spot for organized play as well, a fact that has not escaped a number of online racing associations. For the true NASCAR buff, what could be better than participating in an entire championship season using actual NASCAR tracks and racing against a couple dozen equally obsessed drivers? Hawaii's setup allows password-protecting race entry, so a club can easily schedule races and then limit access to members.

CRASH COURSE

Crashes—automobile, not computer—are common on I Hawaii—perhaps too common. Typically there's at least one pileup on the opening lap of a crowded field, especially if inexperienced users are in the race. While veteran drivers find this maddening, it does tend to thin the herd a bit. Also, there's a scary sort of rush in trying to weave your way through a wreckage-strewn course at close to 200 MPH. Worse are the crashes in which one of the back markers accidentally takes out a passing leader late in the race. And worst of all is the occasional jerk who logs on for the sole purpose of causing as many wrecks as he can.

probably OK to pitch to him as long as your pitcher's stamina is high. The more fatigued your pitcher is, the more likely it is that even poor contact hitters are going to hit the ball.

►Also, pay attention to your opposition's batting order. If first base is open in a tight ballgame and the current batter has good contact and power ratings, check out the batter on deck. If he's deficient in either category, select Strategy-Intentional Walk to walk the slugger and pitch to the weaker player.

Drivers can chat as well as drive during a race. Since it's a near impossibility to simultaneously type and control the car, I Hawaii includes eight preset messages activated by function keys. These can be edited to suit the player's needs and temperament. Accidents typically elicit nasty responses from the victims, and inept drivers will find they can run but can't hide from their angry competitors. Trash talking is fairly common too, so pack a thick skin along with your racing gear.

Give the crew at Papyrus major points for I Hawaii's polish. The system juggles dozens of users and integrates seamlessly with NASCAR. In several hours online over the course of a week, I had no problems either getting or staying connected. I Hawaii runs NASCAR in either VGA or SVGA, at the user's discretion. While both look good, SVGA makes reading car numbers much easier. This is a big help when you need to identify Mr. Clueless. You know—the guy who tried to pass you in the tri-oval, and left both your cars scattered from here to Daytona. What's that they say about paybacks?

FINISH LINE

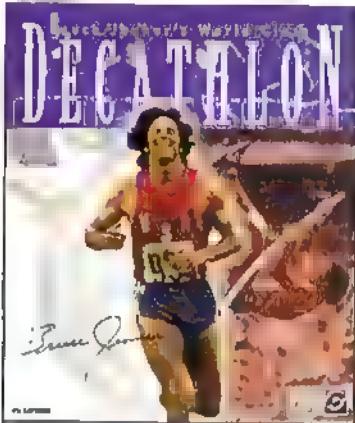
So where is Papyrus going with all this? Considering the recent agreement that parent company Sierra signed with NASCAR to form an entity called the NASCAR Racing League (NRL), it seems pretty clear that the free ride won't last forever. Factor in the planned release of NASCAR 2 later this year, and you can bet that bigger and better things are in store for online racers. ☐

If you want to drive the NASCAR Racing League prototype while it lasts, a few preliminaries are required. First you'll need to own a copy of *NASCAR RACING*. Next, download the self-extracting *HAWAII.EXE* from Sierra's web site (<http://www.sierra.com>). Run the file and follow the installation instructions. After that, all that's needed is a cool head, a hot car setup, and a stomach for long distance charges to Boston. Sadly, at press time there were no local dial-ups for Hawaii, and your Internet connection just doesn't provide the oomph required to keep pace with NASCAR's intense graphical environment. In technical terms this is due to NASCAR's demand for low latency. In layman's terms this translates to big phone bills, since that's what you'll be getting once Hawaii hooks you and reels you in. And hook you it will. The first time you find yourself among a pack of brightly painted Fords and Chevys running full out at 'Dega, or sliding around the curves at Martindale, it's all over. You might as well sell your other games. Keep the modem, though. You're gonna need it when the final version of Hawaii goes online.

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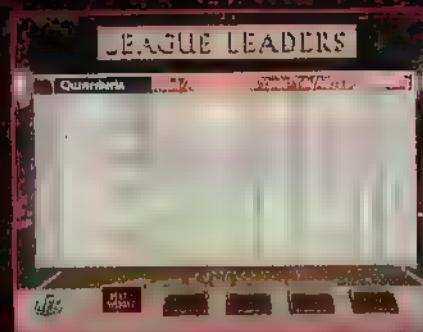
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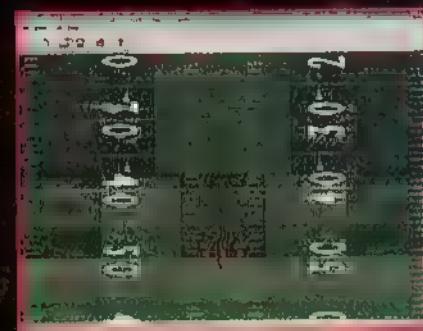
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The football is larger and harder to throw. Do you take a chance on the pass or grind it out with a running attack?



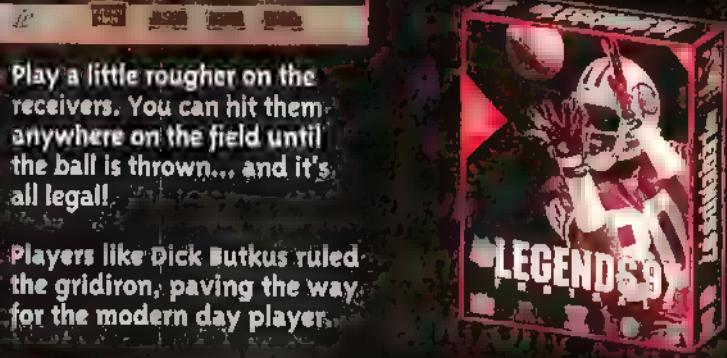
Play a little rougher on the receivers. You can hit them anywhere on the field until the ball is thrown... and it's all legal!

Players like Dick Butkus ruled the gridiron, paving the way for the modern day player.



Rules favor the running game.

Goal posts were placed in the front of the end zone. The "Post" pattern was commonly used to run defenders into the posts for an easy touch down reception.



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Circle Readers Service #40

Ready For Some Football?

ABC's Monday Night Football Is A Pigskin Celebration

by Terry Coleman



It's a hot, muggy evening—the temperature in the mid 80s, the humidity typically high for this seaside sports town. This is Frank Gifford coming to you from Hunt Valley, Maryland, as we take a look at OT Sports and their first game, ABC's

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL. We've been looking forward to this one for a long time, as we trust you have. Now here's Al:

"Thanks, Frank. Tonight we look at a talented, experienced team with members going all the way back to the venerable COACHES CLUB FOOTBALL, one of



► I CAN START, COACH IT, like Bill Cowher, you prefer using "Slash" near the goal line and then moving him to WR for two-point conversions, you can do both from this screen.

the more interesting action affairs. But it's been a tumultuous off-season for Doug Whaley's crew. The difficulties surrounding MicroProse's parent company, Spectrum HoloByte, the joint venture with Disney Interactive—what does all this

portend? Can the additional funding and new marketing muscle translate into a winning season? And what about this being a Windows 95-only product? Here's Dan with a look at the match-ups:

"Thanks, Al. When you talk about computer sports football, you have to talk about FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO. Even though Pat Cook and company have won the CGW sports crown three of the last four years, they really showed their age last year. Sierra can't continue to hide their vulnerabilities behind a graphic smokescreen if they expect to hold off the OT Sports guys. And what about EA Sports? Are they running scared with their perennial vaporware, MADDEN NFL 97? Frankly, the only other legitimate contender is Accolade's NFL LEGENDS. It seems the time is right for OT Sports to make its move. And besides, MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL has us for announcers. How can it lose?"

GET IT KICK-STARTED

The familiar horn riffs form their circular, staccato counterpart to video clips of wide receivers defying gravity to catch touchdown passes with their fingertips. Hank Williams Jr. bursts onto your monitor with a bevy of voluptuous females to spark an undeniable party atmosphere, belting out the famous theme song. And sure enough, Al Michaels, Dan Dierdorf and Frank Gifford are right there to lend commentary and play-by-play. There's little doubt that an American institution has found its way to CD-ROM, in style.

ABC'S MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL is a far cry from the tame multimedia shenanigans of ABC NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL, to name but one example

This has the potential to be real professional football, or at least as close as the average fan can get to it. The main interface screen is a marvel. As you move your mouse over each of the windows, audio is automatically triggered. Everything from 1995 NFL films close-ups of your favorite pro team—say, Miami Dolphins QB Dan Marino breaking the all-time TD pass record—to the highlights from the game you are currently playing, are available with just a mouse click.

OT Sports deserves a lot of credit for taking chances. Instead of having Al, Frank and Dan play it safe with vanilla commentary, the designers encouraged them to approach the voice-overs as though they were calling the actual game. While last-minute trades may result in some gaffes, it's worth it. Nothing captures the feeling of watching a Monday night game more beautifully than listening to Al's dialect tones describing Emmitt Smith plowing for a crucial first down, Frank setting the stage for the confrontation, or Dan criticizing a questionable call. All you need is popcorn and the beverage of your choice—it's better than TV

PLAY-BY-PLAY

Of course, all this multimedia won't matter if the game can't follow the blocks and hit the hole. In the game, as in real life, some things are obvious: Pittsburgh is likely to have quarterback woes this year; Emmitt Smith will rush for a lot of touchdowns; Deion Sanders is an all-world cornerback. Even in this early version, I was able to play several games with multiple outcomes, all of which were reasonable, given the teams' various strengths and weaknesses. Those who live and die by



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cheat codes are advised to get their pigskin fix elsewhere; **MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL** rewards those who understand football.

For example, QBs are rated for their ability to roll out to the right or left. This nicely simulates the differences between Steve Young and Dan Marino without a lot of complicated rules. And unlike a similar system in the old **MONDAY FOOTBALL**, it works. The huge playing field gives you a quarterback's-eye view of

the defense, so that you can read the deep zone coverage, note the blitzers, and take appropriate action.

The actual plays you call are dependent upon your team's playbook, which includes an editor, so you can create your own custom plays. This is simple to use, as it follows standard Windows 95 Explorer conventions. Essentially, the game system assumes that the coaching staff calls plays in to the huddle for each formation—very close to the real thing. This may sound limiting, but it isn't.

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL has the most robust system for calling audibles yet: Simply click and pull to adjust a receiver's route, change the hole the runner hits and pull the lead blocker closer to the point of contact. You can even change blocking assignments. As you create new plays and variations on old ones, just save your plays—such are the advantages of Win 95 gaming.

BACK IN THE POCKET

Make no mistake, **MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL** is an action game. The scoring tends to be a little high, but every game won't end up 41-38. Whereas most action games are 90 percent reflexes and 10 percent stats, **MNF** tends toward a more even balance. So you can't take your third-string receiver and catch 10 straight passes against the likes of Rod Woodson or Aeneas Williams. In fact, until you touch the joystick, the computer controls all of the players on the field during each play. The game is quite playable in coaching mode, but it's admittedly more fun as an action game once you get the controls down. And in a major coup for OT Sports, this will be not merely the first but one of the only major computer football releases this fall to include modern play

INTANGIBLES

There are nice touches throughout. Unlike **FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL**, for instance, **MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL** lets you designate any player as your punt returner. On kickoff coverage, you don't have to suffer the indignity of watching your star fullback get injured on a meaningless play. Each player can be designated for two positions, plus a specialty.

Thus, Kordell "Slash" Stewart can play both quarterback and wide receiver, plus field goal holder, without disrupting the game system.

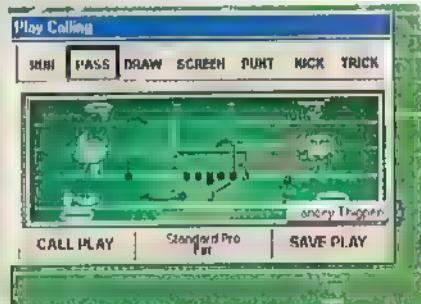
Additionally, you can modify the stats if you feel that Aikman's arm is losing its zip, or if Brett Favre's endurance is likely to diminish without painkillers. Our advice is not to tweak too much, because the player ratings are provided by Stats, Inc., the people who invented "yards after catch" and other such down-and-dirty statistics.

As if all this were not enough, there are

CGW learned just prior to press time that OT Sports is close to signing a deal with Dwango. Dwango feels that it has the latency problem licked—so much, in fact, that you would be able to play **MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL in action mode. We'll keep you posted.**



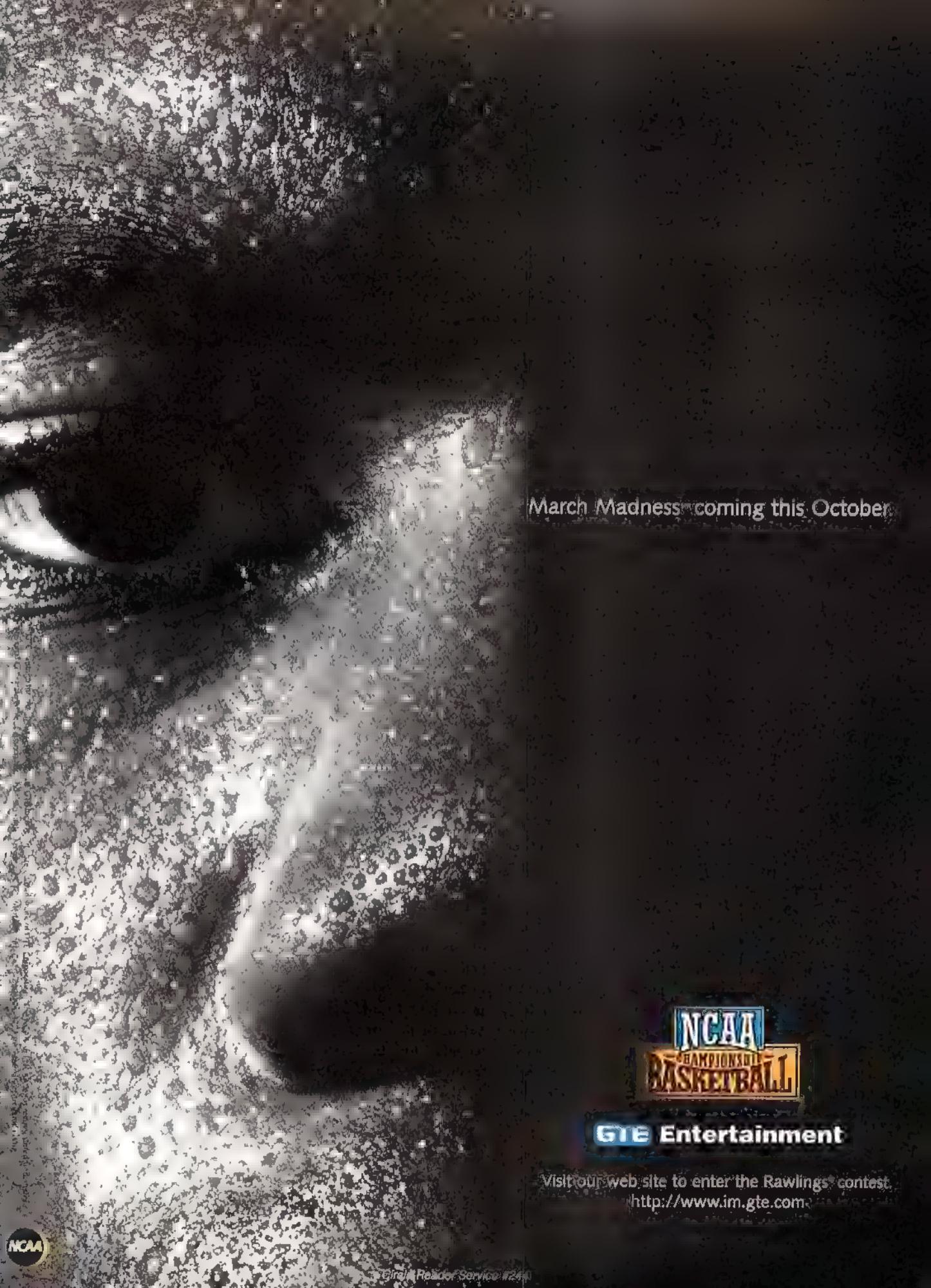
FORMATION SMORGASBORD Choose your favorite formation flavor from today's dozens of combo specials.



INSERT FORK Then avoid a nasty blitz aftertaste by sending your receiver on one of 14 audited pass routes.



TWIST KNIFE Finally, rub salt in the wound. Go to the multimedia screen and watch your completed pass on replay. Mix well.



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Power Hitter

Humble Yet Strong, TONY LA RUSSA 3 '96 Slams One Out Of The Park

by Jeff Green

There is no shortage of show-boats in the world of sports. From megalomaniac NFL stars jiggling their overpaid butts in the end zone because they finally earned their paycheck, to NBA stars strutting and trash-talking their way down the court—there's a lot of athletes out there who never tire of beating their clients and proclaiming to the world how great they are.

But for every Deion Sanders or Dennis Rodman (to name two random players), there's a low-key, no-nonsense athlete who goes out there day after day and, with little pomp and circumstance, gets the job done. In the world of computer baseball simulations, such a game is *TONY LA RUSSA BASEBALL 3: 1996 Edition*. While the makers of the new crop of baseball games are all busy flapping their arms and doing their Superior Dance about how *they* are the ultimate in ultra-realistic, 3D baseball action, *TONY LA RUSSA 3*, with none of the graphic bells and whistles of its competitors, is quietly proving itself to be perhaps the best pure baseball simulation of them all.

A SWING AND A MISS

For the 1996 Edition, Stormfront has significantly updated the game's statistical capabilities, but has not touched the graphics or interface at all. Depending on your bias, of course, that's either good or bad news. The bottom line, graphics-wise, is that *TONY LA RUSSA 3 '96* is now woefully out-of-date compared to its flashier cousins, *HARDBALL 5*, *FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL '96* and *TRIPLE PLAY '97*. If your main concern is state-of-the-art visuals and immersive arcade action, shop elsewhere.

When playing a game, both pitcher and batter are nicely rendered, but it's a

static screen: no matter who's playing, you're always looking at the same two images, both wearing the number 11. The playing controls are harder to master than those in games like *HARDBALL*, and fielding and base running is so tough that—after screwing up enough plays—you'll probably just want to let the computer cover it for you.

Hitting the ball is also difficult, but again, whether this is good or bad depends on your perspective. When you

mode, where you can indulge in the kind of minute, strategic decision-making that is at the heart of this game. The best improvement is the inclusion of head-to-head batter/pitcher statistics and situational batting stats (such as how well a player does on the road, at night, etc.) that can really help you out when you're tweaking your batting orders and pitching rotations. Now when you're playing a game, you can call up a screen that will show you how the current batter and hit-



FLASH IN THE PAN *Tony La Russa's* graphics, state-of-the-art just a year ago, are now starting to look a little crude next to the competition.

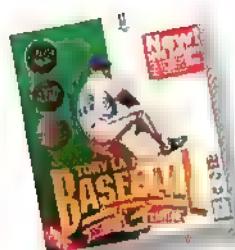
consider that the greatest hitters in the major leagues only hit the ball a little better than 3 out of 10 times. *T1.RB3* is much closer to reality than arcade-based games that consistently let you connect on the first pitch. That said, it can get awfully old to strike out all the time—and guys like Tony Gwynn really ought to get a hit once in a while. You can make it easier on yourself by manually jacking up a batter's hitting ratings—but that would be cheating.

FULL COUNT

T1.RB3 really excels in Manage Only

mode have matched up historically, giving you a better pool of information from which to make a pinch-hitting or bullpen decision.

The Statistical Leaders screen is a stat geek's hog heaven. This is a humongous database of player performance numbers for both real-life and any sim seasons you create, which you can study in a near infinite variety of ways. As your season progresses, you can compare pitching, fielding and hitting performance among all players in the league, by division, team or position. This information is so rich, espe-



Price: \$39.95
System

Requirements: 486-66 or better, DOS 5.0, 8 MB RAM, 11 MB hard disk space (58.5 MB for full installation)

SVGA graphics adapter, 2x CD-ROM drive, Microsoft compatible mouse, supports most major sound cards. Joystick optional

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Developer: Stormfront Studios

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cially with the new situational numbers, that it's easy to get lost in endless study and forget about playing the game. For example, did you know that in 1995 Seattle shortstop Luis Sojo batted .336 on artificial turf but only .221 on grass? (Imagine your loved ones' joy as you go around reciting those kind of stats all day.) My only complaint about this screen is that it would be much better if you could customize the column order to just see the numbers you want. I was frustrated by the inability to see all the batting Triple Crown categories on one screen.

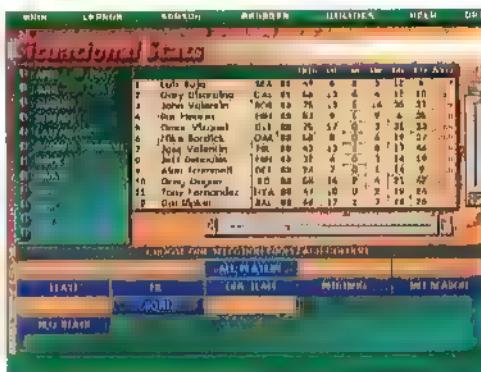
**TONY LA RUSSA
BASEBALL 3** includes three play-by-play announcers—Mark Greenberg, Lon Simmons and Mel

Allen (who passed away this summer)—who now mention the players by name. Though the announcing can get old, it actually does a good job of tracking information throughout a game or season to help provide the occasional kernel of useful data. In one game against the Red Sox, Mo Vaughn stepped up to the plate, whereupon Mel Allen announced that "he's hit five doubles off left-handers this season." Yeah, I know: big whoop. But that's the kind of dinky little stat that can make or break a game for you if

you pay attention and make adjustments accordingly.

FEELING A DRAFT

Along with exhibition and season play, TLRB 3 offers two special modes that greatly expand the game's replayability. The Fantasy Draft lets you participate in a



FEEL LIKE A NUMBER The new situational stats add a whole new dimension of strategic gameplay.

draft to create your own league with any number of teams, using a Rotisserie-style point distribution if you desire. The GM Challenge, somewhat akin to FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL's career mode, lets you run a team (or teams) over a number of seasons—retiring older players and scouting the minors for new (fictional) players based on preferences that you establish—in hopes of building your numerical ruling as a manager.

The GM Challenge in particular is a blast. Once you've taken it many years into the future it gets really interesting, because most of the real-life players have retired, so you can't just fall back on familiar names to win. You need to keep a constant eye open for promising minors, study your younger players and their evolving stats, and keep juggling your roster, batting order and pitching rotation as necessary. Even if I cheated by artificially pumping up my players' ratings, if I then backed off and let the season play out from a distance, I'd find myself falling further in the standings, because the other managers were busy improving their teams by doing what I wasn't doing: managing.

There's a couple areas where the game could still use some big improvements. At the top of my wish list would be an easier way to import updated real-world stats—

tics. Although the new version includes '96 rosters, there were so many trades and injuries early on that every team needed serious editing right out of the box. You can now import and export stats to text files, and you can download and import stats off the Internet through Stats, Inc.—but no matter what you try you're still going to be stuck doing a lot of typing if you're trying to stay current. Stormfront should try to find a way to let players seamlessly integrate new stats into their baseball universe without all the fuss.

Second, trading is still a crude operation. You must perform all player trades manually, for both yourself and the computer, which means that the digital opponent will accept any dumb, unfair trade you propose. I purposely created terrible stats for a fictional rookie pitcher, one Campus Von Beanball, and then successfully traded him one-to-one for...Greg Maddux. It would much more satisfying if the computer would reject trades; even better would be if it could propose its own trades, and announce trades between other teams as the season progressed.

BOTTOM OF THE NINTH

TONY LA RUSSA BASEBALL 3 '96 occupies an interesting netherworld between the pure text-based baseball games like STRIKE-O-MATIC and the FLAARIVALS-style arcade games. Though the game's on-the-field action has pretty much been eclipsed by the competition, it's still a great game for those who find the text games too dry. Other games might put you deeper into the action of baseball, but no game is better than this one in putting you deep into the *universe* of baseball. ■

Tony the Flyster

Tired of striking out all the time? Do what many ballplayers do: cheat. When you come up to the plate, hold down the M, E, G, and A keys simultaneously to jack up your power rating and start hitting the ball out of the park.

Follow the GM Challenge mode through enough seasons, and you'll see a big change in store for the major leagues. Somewhere around the year 2040, female players will start to appear. Let's hope they don't all look like Wally Joyner.

If you have a fairly generic name—like, say, Jeff Green—you might be thrilled to know that you can go to the Edit Player Stats screen, change the name to your own, and hear announcer Mel Allen say your name out loud when you come up to bat.

APPEAL: Fantasy league fans, numbers geeks, and any other would-be managers who lie awake at night playing out seasons in their head.

PROS: Robust, fascinating statistical model, endless replayability through Fantasy Draft and GM Challenge modes.

CONS: Graphics and arcade action aren't up to par with the latest competition.



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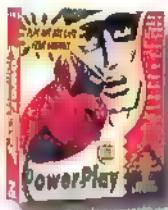


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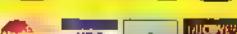
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Your Source Code

CG609



Pulled Hamstring

Interactive Magic's Olympic Hopeful Stumbles At The Finish Line

by Gordon Goble

Necked, a 3D-animated runner hurdles through the countryside of an ancient land, bounding gracefully over the obstacles in his path, heaving small objects as far as his mighty muscles will allow. He serves as a solid precursor to the modern decathlete, and also as

a dramatic opening to BRUCE JENNER'S WORLD CLASS DECATHON. Jenner himself then appears, and one almost expects him to plug his latest exercise device, but thankfully, he does not. Instead, this is just the first of many times we'll see the 1976 Olympic decathlon gold medalist throughout the game, offering hints, instructions, and a gaggle of personal anecdotes on what is arguably the ultimate athletic discipline.

Unfortunately, aside from Jenner's generous presence, DECATHON is yet another reminder that replicating track-and-field competition on a PC is not an easy thing to do—at least not in this basic a format. Sporting weak animation and very little in the way of required user prowess, DECATHON offers a modicum of tactical preparation followed by loads of repetition and a smidgen of good timing. Moderately intriguing out of the blocks, the game becomes substantially less so down the stretch.

ON YOUR MARKS

The object of the game is simple: build a well-rounded athlete and send him into battle. You begin with a "default" kinda guy, one who sports equal skills across the board. To create a winner, you'll need to customize his sprinting, middle-distance running, weight throwing, jumping and

overall coordination skills. The kicker is that each time you add points to a skill, a certain amount of endurance is removed. So you've got to make improvements carefully, because if a guy blows his wad on the 100 meters he won't have as much left for the next event.

On the field, you view your digital decathletes in a close-up view, and, for the racing events, in an overhead view as well. The animation is usually sufficient, but in

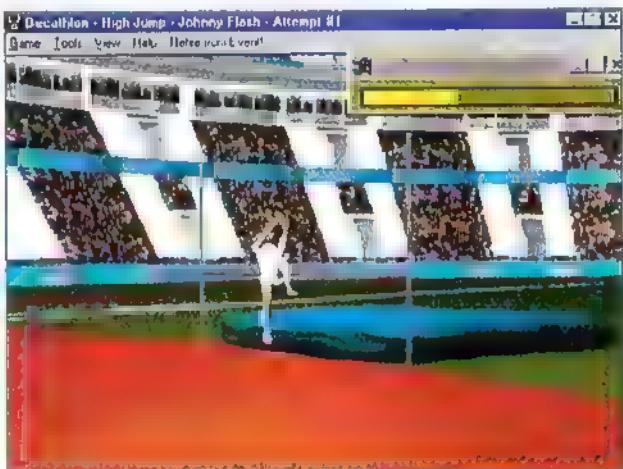
exception is the 100-meter hurdles, where you hold the left button for speed, while tapping the right at just the precise moment to clear each jump.

TO THE SHOWERS

What keeps DECATHON moderately fascinating is the need to monitor the competition. Who's leading? Is he strong in the next event? Do you expend more energy on another high jump attempt, or

is your current mark enough to hold the lead? This makes for interesting tactical judgments and is certainly the program's brightest spot.

But, ultimately, DECATHON's big problem is that it's far too easy and quick. I had played the game for just over two hours, practice and tutorial time included, when I'd become



MISSED IT BY THAT MUCH Most of the decathletes in WORLD CLASS DECATHON take the "floppy" approach to high jumping.

events like the 1500 meter race, the overhead view is blatantly out of sync with what's really going on. In addition, the tough-to-gauge perspectives of the high jump and pole-vault can be a tad annoying, as is the 400 meter race points system, which sometimes awards nothing for no logical reason.

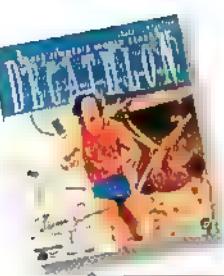
So, what's the gamer doing during each event? In short, not enough. Running segments involve little more than a left-mouse button click to begin the race, and then the odd application of left-button speed bursts and a right-button lane change. Things don't get much more exciting during jumping and weight throwing. One click initiates the approach or throwing motion, and another will release the weight or leave the ground before fouling. A pleasant

the proud recipient of a silver medal at the mid-difficulty level. The game does sport multiplayer capabilities on a single computer, which spices things up a little, but not enough to vault this one onto the podium.

APPEAL: Track-and-field fans who don't know where else to turn; gamers looking for a quick lunch hour fix; Bruce Jenner groupies.

PROS: Interesting and lengthy commentary from Mr. Jenner, good strategic maneuvering of player stats.

CONS: Not enough game; dated, jumpy animations; no feeling of accomplishment.



Price: \$39.95

System Requirements:
486DX-66 or higher
Windows 95, 8 MB RAM
27 MB hard disk space
VGA video adapter (SVGA supported), 2x CD-ROM drive, Microsoft-compatible mouse; supports Sound Blaster compatible sound cards.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: Holy Mackerel Media in association with Dallas Multimedia

Publisher: Interactive Magic, Research Triangle Park, NC

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Reader Service # 328

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Padlocking The Future

*Breaking Out The Crystal Ball
And Forecasting The Future Of Sims*



August, 1995. Windows 95 is released and the face of the simulation world changes forever. The days of sound card and video card configuration, of locating VESA drivers, of praying for support for the more esoteric sim peripherals on your system, are past. Now getting started with a new simulation is as easy as popping a CD into your computer and watching it automatically load. DOS is dead forever.

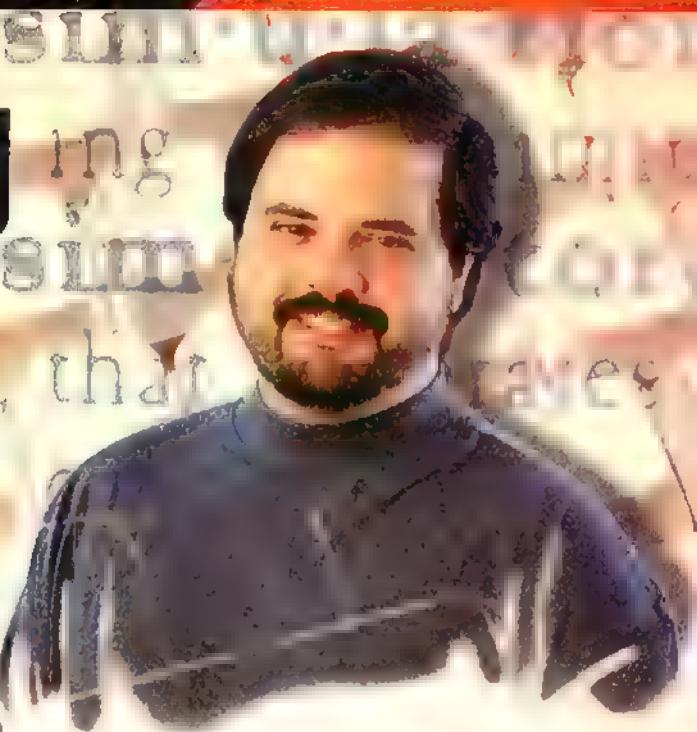
In an alternate universe, perhaps. Our reality is one where most of the sim action is still taking place under MS-DOS, where the few Win 95 simulations are ports or minor enhancements of DOS games. Other than the usual faster com-

puters, the sim world today doesn't look dramatically different than it did this time last year.

That's going to change, though. The promised PC renaissance is still on the way, it's just arriving a bit more slowly than we expected. When it finally takes hold, look for sims to arrive that will make today's games look positively primitive.

HARD CHOICES

As always, the most dramatic changes will come in the area of hardware. If you're a dedicated flight, space, or racing sim fan, you've probably come to terms with the expensive reality that you need to replace your system every two or three years to get the horsepower necessary to run the hottest software. We're entering another cycle of hardware upgrades now. Look for new standards to hit in 1997 for the early adopter crowd—standards that the mainstream sim players will have to



adopt by 1998 to stay current.

Chief among the upcoming changes is the microprocessor. Intel has wrung nearly all the performance out of the current Pentium design that it can. Our testing showed 200-MHz Pentium chips are a mere 10 to 15 percent faster than their 166-MHz brethren, and that's with the addition of other high-speed components such as SDRAM memory. With the motherboard running at a relatively poky 66-MHz maximum speed, souping up the chip's internal clock speed any further has diminishing returns.

The Pentium's not dead yet, though. The new MMX Pentium chips will start to

"The Pentium isn't dead yet, but its days are numbered."

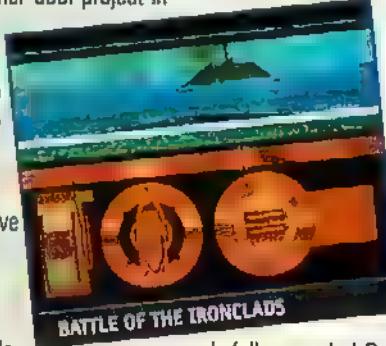
ON THE RADAR

►Our ultra-sensitive Internet worms have picked up a hint that ThrustMaster has another cool project in the works—a device to better take advantage of the mode in sims like FALCON 4.0 and BACK TO BAGHDAD that allows you to show one of your MFDs (Multi-Function Displays) on a monochrome monitor. If you don't have an old Hercules card gathering dust, ThrustMaster may have a solution on the way.

If your tastes tend more towards the historical, you'll want to check out Groller's

upcoming BATTLE OF THE IRONCLADS. This naval simulation set during the War Between the States puts you at the helm of the highest-tech vehicles available at the time—the Monitor and the Merrimac—for both historical and "what-if" missions. If the AI is up to snuff, this Civil War ironclad sim will be a welcome respite from the frantic pace of modern combat. History buffs will find it

worth the purchase for the beautifully-executed QuickTime VR tours of the ships—especially since the real things are still sitting under water



fully-executed QuickTime VR tours of the ships—especially since the real things are still sitting under water



VIVID NIGHTMARES Flying Nightmares 2 will be one of the first sims to try to entice you to buy a 3-D card—dropping one in your system will yield dramatic textured graphics at resolutions up to 1024x768.

appear in coming months, and will give the design one final performance boost. These chips should help the speed of even older simulations, thanks to their bigger 32K internal L1 caches. But the strongest boost will come for sims that take advantage of the new MMX instructions, which can considerably speed graphics manipulations on systems without 3-D hardware. VISION 4.0's developers report a 30 percent frame-rate speedup on systems that take advantage of MMX support.

The real action will soon move to a chip with a more promising future, though. Intel's initial Pentium Pro designs were lousy sim engines. They run 16-bit code more slowly than a comparably clocked Pentium, and the support chips couldn't pump out video very quickly. Look for a new Pentium Pro design to hit soon that does away with the internal L2 cache; this will hurt performance a bit but drop prices dramatically. The performance shortfall will be made up by the

addition of MMX instructions and better support for running older 16-bit code. By late 1997 we expect the upgraded Pentium Pro to be the chip of choice for performance-hungry sim fans.

The next most significant change is one that, happily, won't require you to replace your entire system. I've seen early Alpha versions of flight simulations that take advantage of the second-generation 3D chips from Rendition and 3dfx, and I was absolutely blown away. Once you've flown a sim on a system equipped with good 3D card, going back to standard SVGA is like watching a cartoon. Be warned that it's a little early to make this jump, though. The first-generation 3D chips such as S3's Virge and ATI's 3D Rage are based on older 2D designs, and while they provide some impressive texture and filtering effects, they don't provide the 3D speedup of the ground-up designs.

PERIPHERAL VISIONS

You may not be stuck looking at those dazzling 3D graphics on your dinky old 15-inch monitor, either. Gateway's Destination system is just the first of the "big-screen" solutions for gamers. I expect to see more systems and separate monitors with sizes of 25 to 31 inches pop up over the next year, eventually dropping to prices not much higher than a TV of the same size. And we won't necessarily be watching these screens from across the room—a 31-inch monitor on a (sturdy) desk is the closest you can get right now to a "virtual reality" experience.

Speaking of VR, don't expect VR glasses to be a significant factor over the next

year. Mind you, they're a lot of fun to use, but until the resolution reaches at least 640x480 at prices lower than the current low-res units, they just can't replace your monitor.

But don't think you're through buying new hardware yet. I'm going to be first in line for a force-feedback joystick when they hit the market in coming months. You haven't experienced flying a sim until you find yourself overspeed in a dive and your joystick fights you as you attempt to pull up. Once you've used a force-feedback stick, older designs seem positively flaccid.

SOFT SELLS

What will you be running on all that new hardware? It won't be Windows NT 4.0, at least not in 1997. NT's hardware protection features and poor DOS compatibility make for terrible performance for your old DOS games—if you can get them to run at all. And despite the addition of DirectX to NT 4, don't expect the majority of 32-bit Windows games to be very compatible with the new OS.

You will, however, very likely be running Windows 95 (or the upgrade, code-named Nashville, slated to ship in February, 1997). There haven't been many compelling Win 95 sims yet, and the best—such as Su-27 PLANKER and FIGHT UNLIMITED—are also available for DOS. But that's going to change soon. Most of the sims set for release next year are designed specifically for Win 95. And now that the DirectX toolkit is reaching maturity, those games will finally start to really take advantage of the operating system, making the upgrade worthwhile—especially in conjunction with the hardware upgrades outlined above.

It's the hardware that's going to change the face of simulations, but Win 95 will be the glue that ties it all together and makes it easy for developers to take advantage of the new features. DOS holdouts will find that OS getting only a little more sim support than AmigaDOS in a year or so. And unlike the premature passing of the Amiga, the belated death of DOS is a good thing, an event that's long overdue.

C TIPS!

- Some hints to get you cruising smoothly in *Back to Baghdad*.
- You can speed up mission loading a bit by making sure to load SMARTDRV.EXE before starting the sim. It still takes a long time, but the wait is noticeably shortened.
- Here's an odd one: some gamers have

reported that *Back to Baghdad*, a DOS game, actually runs smoother under Windows 95. Especially if you have lots of memory.

If you're using a Hercules monitor to display the MFD, be aware that this configuration won't work under Windows 95. You have to boot back to DOS or the secondary monitor will be scrambled.

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PC CD-ROM

Longbow Bullseye

Staying On Target In Jane's Chopper Sim

by Robin G. Kim

The tactics required to survive in the realistic combat environment that Jane's AH-64D LONGBOW portrays are quite different from those most veterans of fixed-wing flight sims are used to. This article will take you beyond the basics covered in the manual and training missions, helping you make the most of your Longbow Apache—the deadliest attack helicopter in the world—when flying at the highest realism and difficulty settings.

LOW AND SLOW

For a fighter pilot, getting low and slow in hostile territory can mean big trouble. For the pilot of an attack helicopter, flying nap-of-the-earth at 50 knots, 20 feet off the ground, is business as usual. Use the collective to control altitude instead of the cyclic, because the collective is much



PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF The 30mm chain gun can kill even a T-80 tank if you hose it down long enough at close range.

more responsive and helps maintain a constant speed. The flight path marker, available only with the Transition II HADSS (Integrated Helmet And Display Sighting System) mode, is a valuable aid when flying in the weeds at any speed. Just keep it pointed in the direction you want to go.

The quick stop maneuver, a rapid deceleration to a hover without gaining altitude, is an important one to master for staging bob-up attacks or just to peek over the top of a ridge. The key is to modulate the collective to maintain altitude as you flare with the cyclic. Be prepared to add lots of collective as you slow down and translational lift disappears. Stay above 10 feet—higher if pointed downhill—to avoid hitting the ground with the tail boom. Once you're below 15 knots, activating 1 hover hold will finish the job.

Because popping up from behind a hill tends to expose you to any threats lurking

to your flanks or rear, get us close as possible to the hilltop so you won't have to rise as high. A quick 360 degree scan before unmasking, to check for enemies you may have bypassed, never hurts either. If you must go over, rather than around, a hill, do so at the lowest possible altitude; staying in the ground clutter will often prevent your detection by enemy radar even when they have a clear line of sight.

MEMORY MAP

The Longbow radar system memorizes every target it detects. The TSD (Tactical Situation Display) shows a map that combines what the radar sees now with everything it saw earlier. This is an invaluable situational awareness aid, but note that the last known locations of moving targets get stale over time after contact is broken.

If your ingress flight plan happens to take you near a tall hill far behind the front lines, it's useful to "preload" your



NAP OF THE EARTH Reducing collective to descend this slope while keeping the nose high avoids unwanted acceleration. At the right sink rate, the flight path marker will follow the contour of the hill as shown here.

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PERIPHERAL VISION The TADS acquisition mode has the advantage of allowing you to track targets outside the ground radar's field of view. Since line of sight works both ways, it will also tell you which targets may be able to spot you.

radar map by popping up for a quick long-range radar sweep before proceeding.

Though it's prudent to scan around periodically for air threats, using the 360-degree air radar mode has the unfortunate side effect of clearing the Longbow's memory of all targets as well as Priority Fire Zones. Unless you get into a dogfight,

it's better to rotate the entire ship in a circle while remaining in ground radar mode than to endure the information loss.

The TADS (Target Acquisition and Designation System), with its wide field of view, complements the Longbow's radar. Your Copilot/Gunner uses it constantly to scan for and call out contacts. Those he labels as "friendly" or "target" can be safely ignored; all others are enemies.

SWEET SIXTEEN

The heart of the Longbow Apache weapon system is the RF (Radio Frequency) Hellfire. Rocket pods offer more shots, but it's usually best to equip both choppers in your element with full complements of 16 Hellfires each.

Staying low and at a distance renders you undetectable to enemy radar. Hence,

the Hellfire's LOAL (Lock On After Launch) mode is rarely useful except for attacking from behind a hill at close range or when you have to bob up higher than about 40 feet to lock onto your target(s). If your wingman launches a Hellfire at a target you've ordered him to attack, avoid turning so far that the target leaves the TSD view, because your wingman will match the turn, causing his missile to lose lock and miss.

Hellfires don't work against airborne helos or Su-25s, which, coincidentally, are your biggest threats. Unlike SAMs and AAA, these will hunt you down in your hiding places; keep tabs on them so they can't sneak up from behind. Enemy choppers are best engaged from maximum range with two Stingers each—one rarely does the trick. The Su-25 moves fast and is hard to bring down, so avoid it. Evade its devastating strafing attacks by putting it near your three or nine o'clock and moving fast. Ordering your wingman to attack a distant aircraft is usually not a good idea because he'll charge out toward it, heedless of danger. However, if you're about to get tangled up in a dogfight, use the "weapons free" command to let your wingman fight on his own.

Apache Classics

The early AH-64A Apache is available for selection in any mission. Choosing it over the AH-64D Longbow version will more accurately simulate the historical missions in Panama and Kuwait, and offers a greater challenge—much greater—in campaign missions.

Similar in most ways to the Longbow Apache, the AH-64A's lack of radar profoundly diminishes its capabilities. Its main disadvantages are poorer situational awareness aids and decreased firepower.

Without radar, line of sight is required to spot targets with the TADS—if you can see them, they can often see you. Detection of aircraft behind you becomes impossible. Even worse, there is no TSD or ASE to map targets for you; you have to build a mental map in your head. You must also classify all targets yourself using only the TADS view.

Without radar, you're left with laser-guided

Hellfires, which have a shorter range than the RF variant, cannot attack multiple targets simultaneously, and require you to stay exposed as you guide them in.

How do you cope with all these disadvantages? You must rely heavily on your Copilot/Gunner. When on the move, cycle constantly through the targets he's spotted so you

know right away when new ones appear. Use the Ctrl-T and Alt-T commands often to prioritize the target list. You will detect threats at close ranges more frequently, so be cautious, especially when cresting hills.

Always keep an escape route in mind should you suddenly need to retreat behind cover.

If you decide it's just too tough for you, remember this: The AH-64D is not even in service yet. The A version used by US Army aviators to kick butt during Desert Storm is still the best they have.



SPEED VS. STEALTH

Different missions require different tactics. For close-in support tasks where you must clear a path for advancing forces or help defend against an oncoming enemy, attack quickly—even if it means risking more exposure than you'd like. Killing the enemy after they've run roughshod over your comrades on the ground won't earn you any medals.

If your job is to clear a landing zone for transport helicopters, again you must start out fast, this time to build a big enough lead that you can afford to take your time sanitizing the LZ. Most other missions involve attacks on point targets where time is on your side. These favor a slow, cautious approach throughout.

The tactics and procedures presented here should enable you to pilot your Longbow Apache more effectively in the electronic battlefield. Just remember to fly low, stay invisible, and make every attack an ambush—chivalry is dead. **5**

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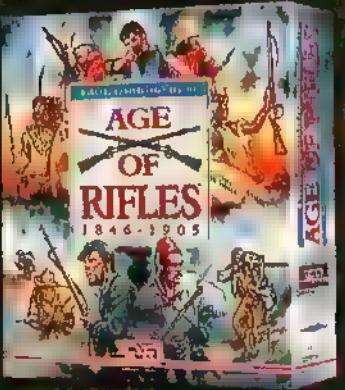
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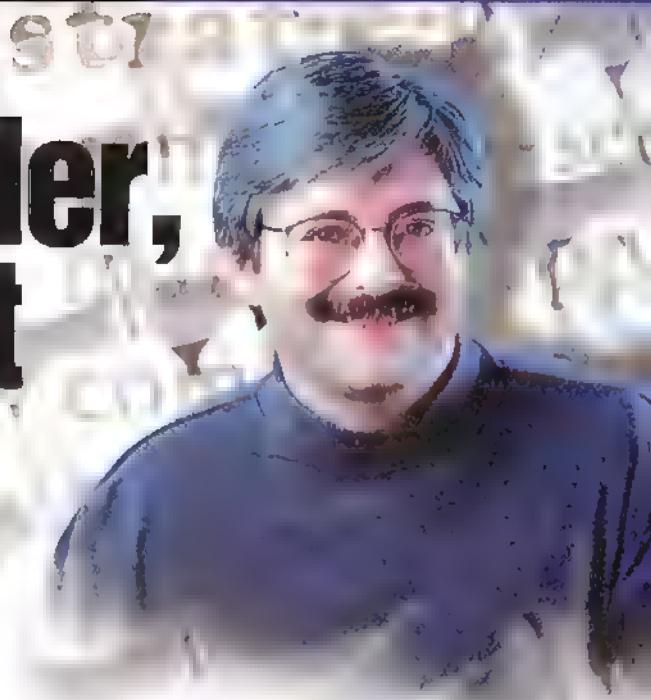
SSI Tries To Conquer The Gaming Galaxy With STAR GENERAL

It was with great amusement that I recently read a competitor's comment about *STAR GENERAL*, as a case of "sequelitis." Cute, certainly—but totally off the mark. Actually, when you look at the best strategy/wargames of the last year or so, almost all are sequels. *COMMAND & CONQUER* was essentially *DUNE 3*, and *CIV II* and *WARCRAFT II* have somewhat obvious origins, as does *FANTASY GENERAL*. Even the best historical wargame, *STEEL PANTHERS*, wouldn't have been possible without the interface/accessibility lessons SSI learned from *PANZER GENERAL*. The reason that these games overcame the dreaded "derivative" stamp was that they added enough of their own newly addictive features. When a sequel is notably less than

the original, as with *ALLIED GENERAL*, everyone knows it. But the argument that all sequels are but pale shadows is simply laughable. *Elfsstones of Shannara* is at least as good a novel as *Sword of Shannara*, and *Godfather II* has, if anything, more depth than the original movie. Games are no different than books or films. All such media try to bridge the gap between art and entertainment.

STARS THAT GLITTER

The upcoming *STAR GENERAL* is a case in point. Senior scripter Chris Carr and others in the mysterious SSI Special Projects Group crafted a pretty good back story for *FANTASY GENERAL*; you'd expect more of the same for *STAR GENERAL*. Instead, SSI is basing the game on *The Fleet* anthology series, edited by David Drake (of *Hammer's Slammers* fame) and Bill Fawcett. No resting on laurels here.



Ironically, by staying with the familiar *GENERAL* turn-based game system—albeit with some modifications—the situations from the books can be most faithfully re-created. There's certainly no shortage of tactical and strategic challenges: hunting down blackmailing raiders in the depths of space, reducing a galactic salient, launching preemptive strikes at assembling invasion fleets, mounting relief expeditions, even destroying your enemy's industrial infrastructure.

The first difference that you note from the rest of the *GENERAL* series is that the action is primarily naval—space navies, that is. Every possible ship from tiny recon vessels with virtually no firepower to

“ **STAR**
GENERAL has
scope that
even **PANZER**
GENERAL
lacks. **”**

BRIEFINGS

► **That other classic space conquest game,** REACH FOR THE STARS, is finally being redone for Windows 95. SSG will develop the product, to be released by Microsoft next year.

► **"I'm not dead yet" Department:** MAGIC: THE GATHERING would seem to be stillborn after the departures of first Arnold Hendrick and then Sid Meier from MicroProse, right? Wrong. Our sources informed us that Sid will receive upwards of \$400,000 from Spectrum Holobyte to finish the game. MicroProse still expects the game to ship sometime this fall, but given the storied history of this product...draw your own conclusions.

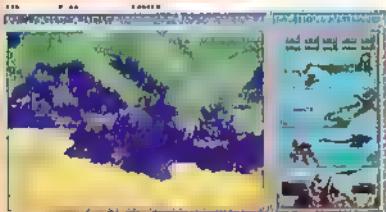
► This Month's "Bang for the Buck": SSG's latest compilation, THE COMPLETE CARRIERS AT WAR, isn't perfect: It still has only VGA graphics. The lack of combat animation may turn off those weaned on *COMMAND & CONQUER* or *WARCRAFT II*. And there is no campaign mode. What this bargain set does give you is a highly playable and tense re-creation of every major aircraft carrier engagement of WWII. The CAW CONSTRUCTION Kit is also included, if you want to simulate obscure engagements near South Java, or if you wonder how Midway might have turned out if the Battle of the Coral Sea had never happened. The excellent documentation, tough AI, and the addition of new scenar-

►►continued on page 198

BRIEFINGS

►continued from page 187

ios for the Atlantic and Mediterranean theaters make this a worthwhile addition to any wargamer's shelf. Contact SSG [(904) 469-8880] for more info; the package has a street



price of about \$39.45.

ONCE MORE INTO THE DRINK SSG's

COMPLETE CARRIERS AT WAR offers the best WWII Pacific gaming series at a bargain price.

►Bonus "Bang for the Buck": Avalon Hill made its reputation with board games, and in that tradition, the new *Hannibal* is one of the best I've seen this year. Using an adaptation of the elegant *We the People* system, *Hannibal* uses cards, political markers and a fast-paced combat routine to make the Second Punic War playable in under three hours. Scipio Africanus at Zama, Hasdrubal, Hamilcar, the other Hasdrubal ("he's not my brother"), double envelopments at Cannae, elephant charges, sieges, starvation over the Alps, the tactical genius of Hannibal—it's all here. A fine game for novices and veteran gamers alike; very replayable. \$40, *Avalon Hill*,

massive battleships able to take out most smaller ships with one volley are included

C TIPS!

►Short of cash in *AFTERLIFE*? Just type in "\$@!" and you'll get an easy 10 million Pennies. But there's a catch: If you use this cheat five times, you'll be greeted by an old friend from *Star Wars*. It's pretty easy to figure out what's going to happen once you see the surprise guest...

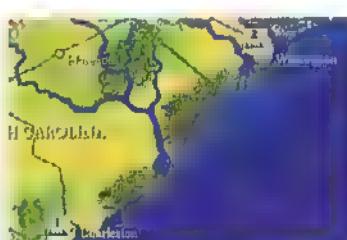
►If you enjoy trashing your *AFTERLIFE* with various disasters, here's a new one for you. Type "SAMNMAX" (all caps) three times. Just ignore the menus that pop

up; space combat is broken down into missile and beam attacks, which are matched against the defenses (armor, shields, etc.) of the defending ship. Losses are split between destroyed and damaged units, much like kills and wounds in *FASTRIS GENERAL*. Also, as with all games in this series, you can get a good idea of expected losses before committing to combat

More powerful ships tend toward greater firing ranges and fuel consumption. Resupplying ships in the great galactic ocean requires fleet tenders, star bases and refit stations—a nice touch, as opposed to the fleets of *PANOR GENERAL*, which never seemed to run out of fuel. Research, always a *GENERAL* hallmark, translates here into Tech Levels. As new Tech Levels become available, unit costs increase, as well as their capabilities: better beam/missile defense, bigger fuel tanks, longer movement capability, and greater search range. To keep formulaic players from cracking

the system, wild cards are included in the mix. My favorite are the missile boats, cheap and very effective against much more expensive ships. The tension of quality versus quantity is made more

up and continue to type. Then clear out the menus and you'll get an interesting but a bit disastrous, cameo
—Thierry "Scooter" Nguyen



►HOLDING BACK THE FLOOD The Wilmington-Charleston corridor is your lifeline to Europe in *AMERICAN CIVIL WAR*. Defend it at all costs.

acute by unit limits in some scenarios.

STAR SOLDIER

Once you achieve "space superosity" in a given star system, the scenario isn't over. You must move transports of troops to orbit and assault the planet. While combining space with planetary combat has been around for years in the sci-fi board game arena, there have been few attempts on the computer side. The latest was *STAR LEGIONS*, a distant descendant of the old *STAR FLEET II* game that crashed more often than the local demolition derby.



►CARRY A BIGGER STICK The advantages of high-tech weaponry are obvious on this Level-6 battleship: great defense, plenty of fuel and massive weaponry.

STAR GENERAL handles this balancing act by equating 15 turns on the planetary surface to 1 turn in space. This works well, but has the danger of bogging down in scenarios where there are too many planets to

►If you are playing the Rebels in *AMERICAN CIVIL WAR* with the Union on the highest AI level, it will target your coastal cities in a way that'll make Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan look like a rowboat on the Potomac. You can't defend the entire Atlantic coast, so you should fight to keep Charleston and Wilmington. Build up the coastal batteries and spend the resources to place an ironclad in Wilmington. With a little luck, you can hold this key port until the end of the campaign, even if Charleston falls.—Terry Coleman

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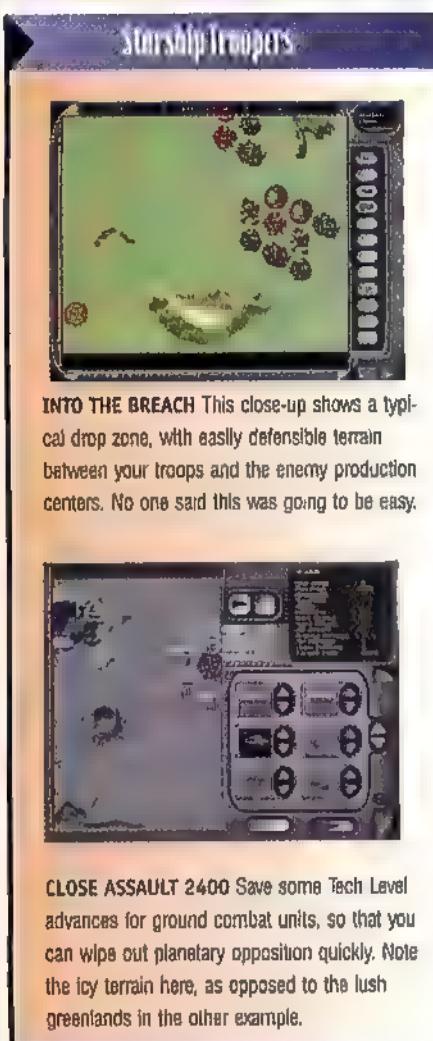
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INTO THE BREACH This close-up shows a typical drop zone, with easily defensible terrain between your troops and the enemy production centers. No one said this was going to be easy.



CLOSE ASSAULT Save some Tech Level advances for ground combat units, so that you can wipe out planetary opposition quickly. Note the icy terrain here, as opposed to the lush greenlands in the other example.

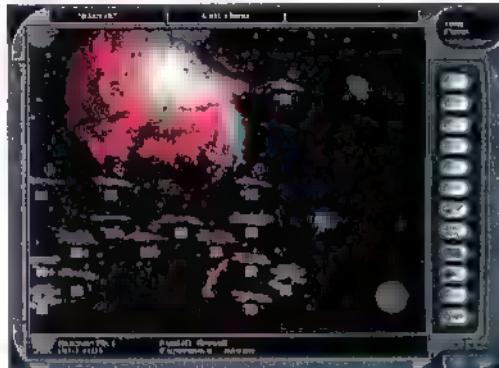
assault. The planetary assault itself resembles a high-tech WWII airborne paratroop, complete with drop zones and interception by enemy air forces. PANZER GENERAL fans will be in their element here, as tanks and infantry are much the same in any era—only with more killing power. There are plenty of different worlds and terrain types for your soldiers to fight over, from ice worlds to deserts to rich, green farmlands. Still, it's the weapons that delight:

Gauss guns, plasma ordnance, personal jump packs, hover tanks, even mega-molecule refractive armor. Until someone gets around to making a first-person 3D space simulation of Steve Jackson's classic Ogre supertank game, this has enough sci-fi flavor to keep any strategy gamer content for earth years.

Once you make planetfall, you must capture and hold all the cities on the planetary map for two turns. Alternatively, you can just eliminate all the defenders. After you have crushed the opposition, you have the option of building production centers (see chart).

The detail doesn't stop with the worlds, either. Unlike most space games, the galaxy of STAR GENERAL is full of space dust and debris. You may attempt to mine asteroids for resources. If you get too close to a black hole, your vessel will get sucked into its gravity well. Ion storms disrupt ships of either side, caring little about their lofty aspirations of galactic conquest. Nebulas and rifts wreak havoc with search and recon missions. And all of these potential hazards are right out of a 1950s' Technicolor film—both beautiful and deadly.

Still, the heart of any GENERAL game is the robust campaign, and STAR GENERAL shouldn't disappoint—so long as you don't mind playing the Human side. The alien races run the gamut from the sneaky Cephaus with stealthy ships to the barbarian Khalians to the paranoid and overpowering Dragonians. There is even an insectoid race, the Xatna, that genetically engineers its ships—talk about biotech! For those who wish to play the campaign from the alien side, maybe STAR GENERAL II is in the works? To be fair,



STARS IN MY POCKET The panoramic graphics are more than empty prettiness. They help you to keep the jumble of ships straight, and they showcase the space "terrain."



FIGHT AND RUN AWAY Every ship in STAR GENERAL has its place. The destroyer here can be deployed for starbase defense or be used as a fast, inexpensive escort for troop transports.

there are plenty of tactical and strategic challenges in each of the four planned campaigns. Search-and-destroy missions, marine landings on vacuum planetoids, sneak attacks to gain rare isotopes, fights for control of asteroid belts—all calculated to present a variety of problems for any aspiring Fleet commander.

Additionally, STAR GENERAL plans to support both network and modem as well as e-mail play. To further facilitate multiple human play, SSI is designing specially balanced scenarios outside of the campaigns. Will all of this be enough to avoid the dreaded sequel-itis label? If the scenarios I played in this early version are any indication of the quality of the final product, STAR GENERAL will be one of the biggest hits of the gaming galaxy.

If we're lucky, maybe SSI will even do a sequel... ■

Prediction Factors

Type

- Agrizone
- Factory Complex
- Mining Complex
- Production Plant
- Military/Industrial Complex
- Orbital Docks

Products

- Food and natural plants
- Resources from raw materials
- Metals and related materials
- Final goods
- Ground units
- Spaceships



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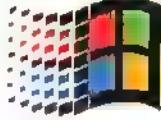
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Windows 95

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Bring It On



ADVANCED

Blizzard Delivers New Campaigns And Challenges For WARCRAFT II



DON'T PLAN ON SLEEPING With the new scenarios and campaigns, the expansion set is sure to keep many gamers happily occupied in the land of Azeroth again.

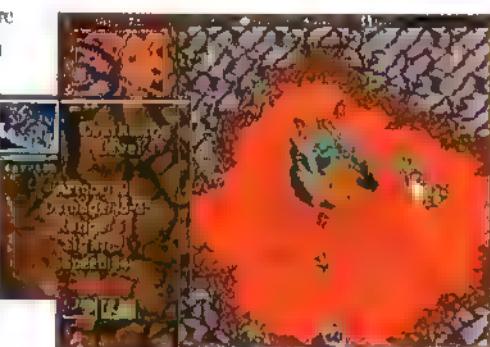
Even after exhausting three-hour performances, great music groups sometimes reserve a final burst of energy for that rousing encore at the end of the show. Similarly, the artists at Blizzard, after delivering a wonderful medley of real-time strategy gaming in *WARCRAFT II*, have returned with an encore called *Beyond the Dark Portal* to extend the experience further.

DARK PORTAL is the expansion set for *WARCRAFT II*, and it's a great follow-up to the original hit, with new scenarios, campaigns, terrain, heroes and challenges. This expansion disk offers, first and foremost, two new campaigns for the Orc and Human sides, each with 12 scenarios. Let the Orcish or Human general be forewarned, though; this isn't a walk in the park. Play the first scenario of the Human campaign and the first thing you'll notice about the *DARK PORTAL* expansion set is that it is incredibly tough. The computer

now starts out with a lot more units, and you're usually in a very inferior position as you begin each scenario. And that's as it should be, since the storyline now has you leaping into the veritable belly of the beast. On the Human side, you have taken the battle to the Orcs, having traversed the portal into their realm of Draenor, battling enormous odds in the hopes of ultimately exterminating their evil. The challenge

from the Orcish side is just as tough, as you now must unite the many warring factions of the defeated Horde and begin anew the quest for bloodshed.

by Elliott Chin



BAD DRAGON One of the coolest features of the expansion set is the addition of hero units with incredible stats; Deathwing the Black Dragon is the most gruesome example.



Running Down Your Foes

If you're losing but don't want to resort to cheats, try these tips to get a leg-up on the computer opponent or your friends in multiplayer battles.

1) To win, you need lots of gold. The first thing you should do is recruit as many peons or peasants as possible to harvest lumber and mine gold, because any cash shortage will invariably slow your troop production.

2) Build towers early because they will not only prevent enemy troops from entering your base, but also allow you

the luxury of diverting resources from military production to structure building. Guard towers are especially useful if you expect to be attacked by air units. Since towers have relatively low hit points, surround them with farms, which can absorb a lot more damage. While enemy units are busy trying to get past the farms, the towers can chew them up easily.

3) On the human side, make extensive use of Invisibility. Cast this spell on a knight, the fastest ground unit, and send him to scout out enemy territory.

If you have air units, you can cast the spell on a flying machine or zeppelin to make reconnaissance runs in secret. Other units are too slow to take advantage of the spell.

4) On the Orc side, have your Death Knights resurrect slain peasants. Because they are the easiest and quickest units to kill, peasants can be dispatched quickly by accompanying grunts and then raised as more powerful skeletons. A single death knight with full mana can thus create a ready-made war party of five skeletons in seconds.

Price: \$29.99
System Requirements: IBM compatible 486-33 or better, 8 MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM Drive, hard drive, SVGA graphics, DOS 5.0 or higher, requires *WARCRAFT II* to play; supports most major sound cards.
of Players: 1-8 over IPX network
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Cyberlore Studios
Publisher: Blizzard Entertainment
Irvine, CA
(800) 953-SNOW
Reader Service #: 323

start out completely different depending on the side you've chosen, and they continue that way. Another nice touch is that the missions aren't as mindless as some of the earlier missions in WARCRAFT II. Since they assumed that everyone who buys DARK PORTAL will have already played through WARCRAFT II, Blizzard went ahead and made sure all the scenarios in the new campaigns were

challenging and very tough. In many cases, you'll need to maximize your strategy by exploring quickly, building camp immediately and sending out your forces for quick strikes and to divert enemy attention. The new campaigns will thoroughly frustrate many gamers, but then they'll also challenge you to think quickly and act efficiently.

Aside from the new campaigns, there are also 50 new scenarios for single and



► DWARVES ON PARADE Enemy installations are much tougher to crack in BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL; use dwarves or sappers to clear away clusters of enemy troops and to destroy towers.

multiplayer games. They are much tougher and in some cases, much weird, than the stand-alone scenarios from WARCRAFT II. There is one scenario set up like a chessboard and another where your units are heroes on steroids with multiplied hit points and damage. But most of the added scenarios are fun and different, keeping the variety alive in the gameplay.

GREAT HEROES AND MONSTROUS DRAGONS

BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL also has new hero units, and unlike in WARCRAFT II, they're more than just pretty faces. Now, the heroes have enhanced stats. Each side has five heroes, and they are beefed-up representatives of some of each side's basic troops. There is a footman hero, named Danuth, with triple hit points and attack, as well as an archer heroine, gryphon riding hero and other units. The Orc's dragon hero, Deathwing, in particular, is awe-inspiring, and there is a certain feeling of exhilaration in commanding this hovering behemoth of death to lay waste to human villages.

Another nice feature that you'll find in the new campaigns is a new type of terrain, the Orcish homeland, where trees

are mushrooms, rocks and goldmines are black, and the sea is bubbly and green.

All is not perfect in the DARK PORTAL, though. For one, the missions are at times a bit too difficult, and I fear some may give up in desperation before they crack the particular scenario they are stuck on. Many others who manage to defeat the computer will still notice some AI flaws, such as the fact that the enemy never uses Goblin sappers. Also, when I tried

to create a new map with the new Orcish terrain and hero units, I couldn't. Fortunately, Blizzard has a patch in the works that will fix this problem. Look for it at Blizzard's website at www.blizzard.com.

With all the new features, the much more challenging and intelligent scenarios, and the new campaign, BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL is a must-buy for any WARCRAFT II fan. Best of all, though, is that Blizzard isn't trying to rip you off for the chance at new conquests and more WARCRAFT gaming. At less than thirty dollars, you have no excuse not to pick up this expansion set. All gamers who enjoyed their sojourn to Azeroth and wanted to stay longer will definitely want to experience this rewarding encore to an already wonderful game. S

Cheating Your Way To Victory

The tough missions in DARK PORTAL are sure to stump more than a few WARCRAFT II players. Here are some cheats for those times when you don't care to fight fairly. To use them, press enter and then type the code.

Unite the clans—Automatically wins scenario.

You pitiful worm—Automatically loses scenario.

It is a good day to die—Grants invulnerability and super strength to your units and buildings.

Glittering prizes—Gives you a hoard of gold, lumber and oil.

Valdez—Boosts your oil reserves.

Hatchet—Speeds up your lumber harvesting.

Every little thing she does—Upgrades player's magic.

Deck me out—Upgrades units.

On screen—Displays entire map.

Make it so—Accelerates building construction.

There can be only one—Automatically wins campaign.

Tigerlily—Enables scenario jump.

Level Name (e.g. Orc15)—Jumps you to the appropriate scenario; the scenarios in the DARK PORTAL campaign are 15 to 26.

Disco—Changes soundtrack to a more contemporary tune.

► APPEAL: Anyone who enjoyed WARCRAFT II will love this expansion set, and those who dig real-time strategy gaming or fantasy will want to get copies of both WARCRAFT II and this expansion set.

► PROS: Two new campaigns, dozens of new single-player and multiplayer scenarios, hero units that actually have heroic stats, and more challenging missions.

► CONS: Some missions may be too difficult and frustrating to sustain interest, and the AI still has a few flaws.



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They stole your spaceship.

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Circle Reader Service #175



One Hell Of A Game

LucasArts' First Strategy Game Takes You On A Ride To Heaven And Hell

by Tim Carter

"Studies have shown that the only thing to keep lost souls from wandering off is the promise of free beer."

Sage advice from Jasper, one of your expert advisors in LucasArts' new sim, *AFTERLIFE*. As you might guess from the title, *AFTERLIFE* is sort of a celestial *SIMCITY*, where players control the construction of both heaven and hell. There is a lot of humor in the game, and, while most of the jokes are puns, the humor adds a very nice touch both in terms of dialogue and the overall slate everyone must pursue to be successful.

As a Demiurge (the game's way of putting you in control without actually calling you God), you are responsible for all aspects of the development of both heaven and hell. As in its many predecessors, a large part of *AFTERLIFE* revolves around zoning areas for various types of development and constructing roads to connect them all together.

To make things more interesting, the basic goal of development in heaven is the opposite of that in hell. That is, in heaven, you must strive for harmony, efficiency, and an easy life for all. This means planning follows the same basic lines as other planning sims, with the emphasis on minimal traffic jams, good homes for everybody and so on.

In hell, on the other hand, the objective is to make the residents' lives, well, hellish.

Really dysfunctional traffic systems, long gaps between sales, and other unpleasantries are all to be desired, not avoided.

beer runs out, whichever happens first).

Everything must be paid for by, you guessed it, pennies from heaven, collected from souls as they come through the front door. A key element to success in *AFTERLIFE* is getting your pennies-per-soul rate high

enough that you are not trapped in deficit spending. Even if you keep the afterlife solvent, you may face other perils that can greatly disrupt your planning. Hell can freeze over, or your subjects may suffer destruction at the hands of the



WELCOME TO YOUR AFTERLIFE Your helpful assistants, Jasper and Ana, along with the game's humor and dual-realm approach, make for some fun strategy gaming

This makes sense, of course, and also means that you can't simply duplicate the construction of one plane in the other. The basic units of zoning are rewards (in heaven) and punishments (in hell). Each plane has seven different types of zone, based on the seven deadly sins and their mirror images, the seven heavenly virtues. In addition, players can (and should) buy residences and training centers for demons and angels, roads, bridges, heavenly gates, and even beer halls where lost souls can be held captive until their domiciles are ready (or until the

Four Surfers of the Apocalypso, to name only two possible disasters).

To make matters more complicated, heaven and hell are connected to a planet of mortals (not Earth, but distinctly Earth-



MUNICIPAL BUNGLING 101 City planners will delight in creating traffic snarls in hell. Invest in long windy roads, and make sure everything leads back to a single, narrow highway.

Price: \$49.95

System

Requirements: IBM compatible 486-66 or better, 8 MB RAM SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM drive, 8 MB hard drive space; supports most major sound cards. Macintosh OS 7.1, 33MHz 68040 or PowerPC.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: Michael Stummle

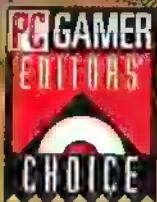
Publisher: LucasArts
San Rafael, CA
(800) 98-LUCAS

Reader Service #: 324

"This is a spectacular game, and a riveting history lesson as well!"

WATERLOO

BATTLEGROUND 3

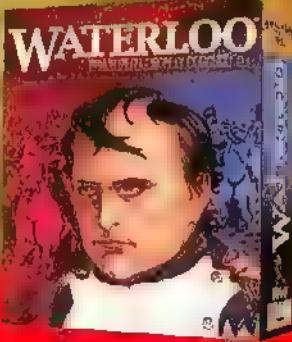


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HELL'S GOT LEGS Many of the punishments and rewards are wacky and funny, like the ultimate lust punishment, The Big Tease Shower which drives you so horny you go mad.

like), which affects the supply of souls to the afterlife. A decent world war can quickly overload an unsuspecting deity, particularly if he/she/it does not have the cash on hand to purchase an entire strip of beer halls.

The residents of your planet also hold a number of religious beliefs, which in turn affect the requirements of heaven and

hell. For instance, some worshippers believe in heaven or hell only (101 IOs), and thus will go to only one plane. Others believe that heaven and hell await (111 IAs) and will thus serve their time in purgatory and then head upstairs for their final reward. Either may believe in reincarnation or an eternity in the afterlife, which will obviously influence your overall population. (Those who believe in reincarnation are the most profitable souls to have around, as they pay each time they arrive.)

On the whole, *AFTERLIFE* is a well-designed simulation that adds a lot of new twists to a successful game genre. Gameplay is further helped by the overall humorous approach, and by the diversity between heaven and hell.

HELLISH DOCUMENTATION

The game's only real fault is that it was released with completely inadequate documentation. The manual is a little booklet that comes inside the CD case, and provides only the most elementary information about the zoning possibilities and the commands. There is almost no attention given to how to play, or how the various aspects of the game interrelate.

The on-line tutorial provides some help, and in fact, as tutorials go, is quite good, but it simply cannot make up for the complete lack of other documentation. Just to show that they are not completely neglecting their paying customers, LucasArts has included a few excerpts from the strategy guide.

Huh? Why not just include a little errata note saying "We have all the information you really want, we just figure we can get you to shell out a few more bucks to read it." The last time I checked, strategy guides were supposed to provide gamers with additional hints on winning, if they felt they needed them. Information crucial to playing the game in the first place should

come with the game itself. Anything less is either incompetence or gouging.

The only mitigating factor in the case of *AFTERLIFE* is that in the course of playing the first few games most people will pick up all they need to know to be successful. In part this is because the basic game system should be pretty familiar to players by now, and because your celestial advisors will provide detailed, useful advice when things start to go wrong. Paying attention to their requests will guide you past most problems, along the way teaching you how to play. Still, this is no replacement for a decent rule book.

Still, the paltry instructions that do come with the game are enough to get you going, and even when you are losing, *AFTERLIFE* is a lot of fun to play. I have always questioned the long-term replayability of strategy simulations like these, which do not have an opposing player to race against. The success of *SIMCITY*, amongst others, suggests that I am in the minority here, but I do think that building the same type of heaven and hell time after time has a tendency to get boring.

Why couldn't the designers of *AFTERLIFE* have added in a multiplayer option where one player controlled hell and the other heaven? The rivalry seems like a natural, and it certainly would give the game a longer life on my hard drive.

In the end (grin), if you like this sort of simulation in general, you will probably have a great time in the afterlife. If *SIMCITY* put you to sleep, the humor of *AFTERLIFE* might keep you awake for a little while. And when you're not busy laughing, you'll have a great time playing Demunge and dohing out rewards and punishments in the afterlife. ☺

PAPPEAL: Fans of *SIMCITY* who like laughs with their city building.

PROS: Lots of humor, two distinctly different and challenging realms to manage, good on-line help and a fresh approach to planning sims.

CONS: Horribly inadequate documentation and gameplay that eventually gets repetitive.



Heavenly Strategy

Unlike earlier sim games, *AFTERLIFE* does not necessarily reward a rapid initial expansion. Everything costs money, and cash usually becomes pretty short around the 100 year mark. (Or earlier, depending on your spending habits.) Since the flow of souls grows gradually as your planet develops there is no need to rush into massive building early in the game. As a general rule, only build the absolute minimum, and go for quality over quantity whenever possible.

The following tips should get your first few games off to a good start.

- Manage your vibes carefully. In hell, bad vibes are good, as they make the environment less pleasant. In both heaven and hell, better vibes mean more sophisticated buildings. Better buildings mean more souls per square, and also more pennies per soul, which is the key to a positive cash flow.
- Train and house demons and angels from the beginning. Imported workers cost a lot of money, and toptias send out beneficial vibes.
- Always listen to your advisors, and check with them for feedback often. They will give you advice about many things which are not in the rule book.

TITANIC

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GTE Entertainment



When Johnny Comes Marching Home

*AMERICAN CIVIL WAR:
More Firepower On
THE ROAD FROM SUMTER
TO APPOMATTOX*

by Terry Coleman

The War Between the States is more than dry history to most Americans. Tales of families torn asunder by the war, of homes decimated, and of relatives who never came home, are passed from one generation to the next—right along with the stories of great struggles at Gettysburg or Shiloh. I distinctly remember hearing some of these stories one night as a teenager, and (having memorized most of these tales) being unable to place one of the soldiers' names—I had never heard it before. This heretofore unmentioned ancestor buried in my family's Civil War lore turned out to be my great-great-great uncle. Seems that my great-grandmother's side of the family conveniently forgot to mention the man's existence to me for many years. His "un-person" status came about simply because the man had fought for the Union, and—you guessed it—he had thereby forsaken his native Mississippi.

BETTER TIMES ARE COMING

With a denial of reality that would do my great-grandmother proud, the computer gaming industry has ignored a simple fact: American Civil War games sell.



Price: \$59.95

System Requirements:
IBM compatible 486-33

or better, 8 MB RAM,

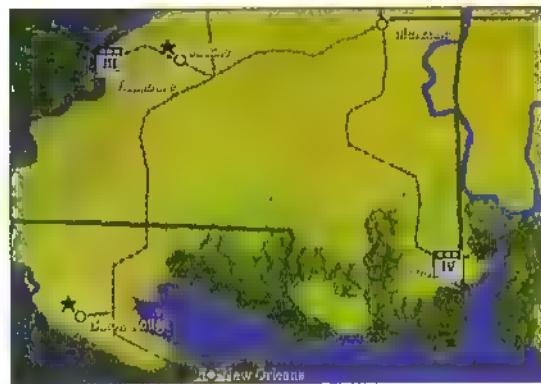
55 MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or better, 2x CD-ROM, Windows compatible sound card

of Players: 1-2, hot-seat and e-mail
Protection: None

Designer: Frank Hunter
Publisher: Interactive Magic,

Research Triangle Park, NC
(919) 481-0722

Reader Service #: 325



THE FATHER OF WATERS 1863 scenario. New Orleans has fallen, and to keep the Mississippi River out of Union hands, Pemberton must hold the Vicksburg fortress and slow Grant's advance—challenging for both sides.

even the mediocre (*BLK AND GRAY* by Impressions) and the poor (*Empire's Civil War*). Now, of course, that Talonsoft's *BATTLE GROUND: GETTYSBURG* has made the Civil War again fashionable, the floodgates are open, with both *ARMY OF RIFLES* and *ROBERT E. LEE: CIVIL WAR GENERAL* (wonder where they came up with that catchy title?) on their way even as you read this. But as challenging and entertaining as these tactical/operational games might turn out to be, where does that leave more strategically-minded gamers?

Thankfully, Interactive Magic knows a diamond in the rough when they see it. *AMERICAN CIVIL WAR* is the third attempt from Frank Hunter to perfect his *THE ROAD FROM SUMTER TO APPOMATTOX* design. And a long, difficult mad it is, where you must tackle the tough decisions faced by Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Should I remove the ineffective General Halleck and put Ulysses S. Grant in his place, regardless of the consequences? Do I risk violating Kentucky's neutral status? How do I get that blasted Stonewall Jackson out of the Shenandoah Valley? If the

answers to questions such as these were simple, it wouldn't be much of a game. They aren't, however. As a result, *AMERICAN CIVIL WAR* is a complex, rich and ultimately satisfying game.

WAS MY BROTHER IN THE BATTLE?

True to the strategic scale of the game, the smallest unit that may operate independently is a division; more commonly, you maneuver corps and armies. Each division is comprised of brigades, so that you may have famous units such as the Iron Brigade serving in their historical role as part of the Army of the Potomac.

Each unit begins as green, and with combat experience, can be transformed into a hardy group of veterans. Naturally, more experienced troops have better combat modifiers. So, for example, it's not uncommon for a group of veteran troops armed with inferior weapons to defeat larger forces comprised of mostly raw recruits. Inexperience tends to be more of a problem for the Union, since the Rebels rarely get enough volunteers to swell the ranks sufficiently to make up for their losses. All in all, though, the game provides a good simulation of the manpower differences between North and South—although the Confederates did a better job in real life of blending green troops into crack units without losing much efficiency, a situation that the game doesn't faithfully recreate.



In 1989 the ultimate tank game was *M1 Tank Platoon* from MicroProse*. It was strategy, tactics, and action combined in one great simulation called "The Best Tank Game Ever!" by Computer Gaming World.

M1 Tank Platoon was created by game designer extraordinaire, Arnold Hendrick, founder and chairman, "Wild Bill" Stealey, and the other dedicated professionals of MicroProse, Inc.

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Combat won't do much for those weaned on Warcraft II. Come are the miniatures-style battles of SUMTER TO APPOMATTOX, victims of poor AI and unmanageable real-time command systems. While no doubt a painful decision for the designer, this radical change has improved the game immensely. When the competent strategic AI out-maneuvers your army, you must now save yourself through your wits instead of your mouse.

If anything, the combat options have been pared back too much. Now, all you have is a choice of Skirmish, Low or Moderate intensity. You make your choice,

taking here can change Defend orders to Attack—never a dull moment.

Inspiration = Affects overall morale of troops, and may give "morale shifts" to combat odds; leader may attempt to rally routed troops; an Army commander with high inspiration trains troops more effectively

Initiative = Based on leader's experience and innate sense of timing; directly affects casualties and morale during and after battle

Tactical Ability = Primary combat resolution statistic; may increase with experience

tions to the front and of cotton to Europe, is essential for any hope of Rebel victory. You learn how to juggle production; to defend against amphibious invasions; to get your fast vessels past the Union naval blockade; and to manipulate European politics for more aid (and maybe, even an early end to the war). And you play the game again, and again, each time with a different strategy.

ASKHOAN FAREWELL

Are there problems with AMERICAN CIVIL WAR? Well, the Win 95 interface works, but at times, it's slower than a snail racing on a cold plate; running the game in Windows 3.1 is even more sluggish. You can't really open multiple windows, either. To be fair, the wonderfully complete manual includes a nice tutorial. And the game itself, while complex, has a nice internal logic. The multimedia add-on disk isn't Ken Burns, but it is professionally done, and certainly better than most Civil War fare for CD.

When you balance the irritations versus the number of options in the game—changing the Confederate capital, modifying slavery status, the scenario editor—it's hard to go wrong with this game.

Provided, that is, that you accept AMERICAN CIVIL WAR for what it is: the best strategic-level game on the entire War Between the States. I'd like to think that, torn as he was between North and South, my great-great-great uncle would agree that this game does justice to both sides of the conflict—and to all the brave souls who fought in it. ☐

HERE A LEE, THERE A LEE Send Marse Robert" to Memphis, where he has a good chance of relaxing Tennessee and/or threatening Kentucky. Just make sure to train your green troops heavily first.

VIRGINIA REEL Meanwhile, leave Joe Johnston as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. While not as popular as Lee, Johnston can easily hold Fredericksburg against large numbers of Union troops.

the computer rolls the bones (in more ways than one), and a lot of numbers get crunched, based on the relative morale, training, weaponry, supply, terrain and leadership of each force. It would have been nice to try outflanking, refusing flanks, frontal attacks, and other options, but I respect the decision, obviously made to keep the game's complexity from getting out of hand. (Besides, if it's battle intensity you crave, Talonsoft marches onto a new BATTLEGROUND every couple of months.) After the battle, the loser retreats and the victor is generally exhausted—a pretty fair simulation of Civil War conflict.

THE SOUTHERN SOLDIER BOY

Where the game really shines is in its depiction of leaders. Over 100 star adorned military titans of both sides are rated for

Aggressiveness = A personality trait much like Battle Lust in an RPG. A high

This unique blend of ratings allows the leaders to emulate their real-life roles. McClellan, for example, is an inspiration to his troops. While perfect for training and whipping an army into shape, McClellan is so hopeless tactically that he eventually becomes a liability. If you remove "Little Mac" before his approval rating with the average Yankee soldier drops, however, you will find that your approval rating as President drops dramatically. It's not easy being Lincoln.

What does seem easy at first is playing the Confederates, with their dashing, talented leaders such as Lee and Jackson. But you soon find out that all these abilities and more are necessary to balance the North's enormous advantage in men, material, and huge Union fleets, poised to strangle the waterways of the South.

Eventually, you figure out that the detailed supply rules are more than just a nuisance. The transfer of food and munitions to the front and of cotton to Europe, is essential for any hope of Rebel victory. You learn how to juggle production; to defend against amphibious invasions; to get your fast vessels past the Union naval blockade; and to manipulate European politics for more aid (and maybe, even an early end to the war). And you play the game again, and again, each time with a different strategy.

APPEAL: If you're into Civil War grand strategy, this is the only game in town.

PROS: Depth and tremendous scope, from naval conflicts to the confused fighting in the Trans-Mississippi. Leader models and politics are excellent and seamlessly integrated.

CONS: Interface fails to take advantage of Win 95; long load times on anything less than a Pentium 90. Strategic combat is realistic, but way too streamlined.





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The Battlefield's Higher Education

GameTek's WAR COLLEGE Just Doesn't Make The Grade

by Patrick C. Miller

Most gamers are willing to overlook a little marketing hyperbole if we're really interested in a game. But there are the occasional outrageous claims that you just can't let slide. When I saw on THE WAR COLLEGE box that the UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR (I and II) is "the best-selling computer wargame of all time," my BS sensor blew a fuse. Sorry, GameTek, I know that revisionist history is *de rigueur* these days, but you might as well tell us that *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* won an Oscar.

While WAR COLLEGE is, in some ways, an improvement over UMS II, in other ways, it's as bad or worse than its predecessor. To say the combat model is unrealistic is to put it nicely. Unbelievable and



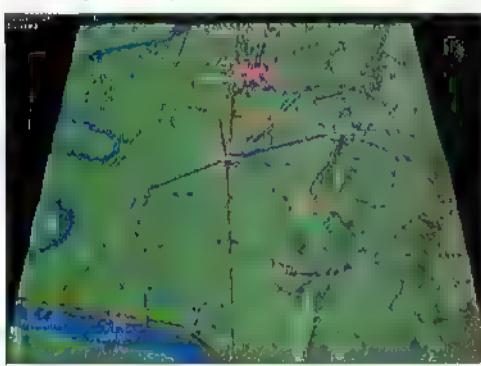
NAPOLEON'S AUSTERLITZ BLITZ WAR COLLEGE's point of merit is its detailed online encyclopedia. Here, the French victory over the Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz in 1805 is described.

ridiculous are more appropriate. You don't have to play this game long before you find yourself staring in disbelief at your monitor. Depending on your frame of mind, one of two reactions is likely: You'll either quit the game in disgust or have a good laugh at this so-called "military battle simulator" which GameTek lauds as "the most sophisticated" and "most successful" of all wargames.

Russian Field Marshall Kutuzov. From the American Civil War, there's the bloody clash at Antietam in 1862 where Union Major-General George McClellan takes on Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Finally, from World War I, there's the 1914 battle of Tannenberg in which German General von Hindenburg attacks a Russian army commanded by General Samsonov.

With the exception of Pharsalus—and only

because it includes no fire combat—it's difficult to tell that most of these battles were fought decades or centuries apart. Practically the only discernible difference between scenarios is that formations available in some eras aren't available in others (although there was most definitely a square formed around Pompey's camp when I approached it with Caesar's cohorts).



SATELLITE RECON OF ANTIETAM WAR COLLEGE's impressive battlefield maps were constructed with the help of satellite photos, but they can't hide the fatally flawed combat model.

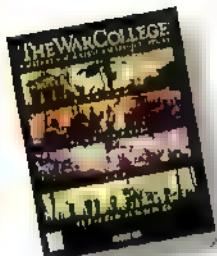
MILITARY CASE STUDIES

Rather than claiming, as UMS II did, that it can simulate any battle from history, WAR COLLEGE takes a new tack by offering four battles spanning ancient times to World War I. The battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C. pits Caesar against Pompey during the Roman civil war. At Austerlitz in 1805, Napoleon faces

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

There's also the matter of the game having absolutely no sound. What game publisher in the 90s produces a game without sound? Even the rudimentary games I played on my Kaypro II back in the mid-80s had sound. But with WAR COLLEGE, once you get past the music in the introductory screens and the online encyclopedia, the game is totally silent. Apparently, professors at the WAR COLLEGE want it quiet in their classrooms.

After loading the game, you can scroll



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of Players: 1-2

Designers: D. Ezra Sidran, Ed Isenberg

Andy Kanakares

Publisher: GameTek
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Fig. 1: Electric Chair



Fig. 2: Gallows



Fig. 3: Guillotine



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through the four scenarios and either elect to play one or view the online documentation that provides detailed historical background on each battle. Bucking the trend of recent wargaming titles that provide minimal information on their subjects, *WAR COLLEGE* provides background information that is quite well done and is by far the best aspect of the game. Not only does it give a strategic overview of events leading up to the appropriate battle, but it also covers the leaders and armies involved, as well as the formations and tactics they employed. The maps outlining the maneuvers of the armies are excellent. For those unfamiliar with any of the battles, this information provides a valuable orientation prior to assuming command.

Once you've selected a scenario, you pick the side you'll play and head into battle. The first thing you notice about the battlefield map is how realistic terrain

ORDERS TO GO

Giving orders is a simple process because there are so few options from which to choose. Besides telling your units where you want them to go, you can order them to adopt an attack formation, a defensive formation, form into column or, at Austerlitz, form into square. Units can also be instructed to fortify their positions or conduct a forced march. All fire and melee combat results are handled by the computer. You have no control over the targets your units select for fire. Right-clicking on any friendly unit provides information on its status.

In one of the strangest design decisions of the game, all artillery is treated as if it's permanently attached to infantry and cavalry formations. Therefore, you have no ability to mass artillery fire where you need it most. In addition, artillery can fire in any direction without penalty and never suffers casualties proportionate to

the unit to which it's attached. This means that units with only a few men remaining can continue to inflict heavy casualties on enemy units, even if the enemy units are behind or flanking them. Until a unit is completely destroyed or runs out of ammunition, the artillery attached to it fights as if it's at full strength.

If fire combat seems ridiculous, melee is even worse. Imagine a brigade of Union infantry counter-charging a brigade of Confederate infantry. The two units clash, inflict casualties on each other and then proceed to "warp" through one another, both continuing on

their merry ways in opposite directions. Perhaps the designers got the idea for this innovation while watching Gumby move through solid objects.

TRENCH WARFARE MADE EASY

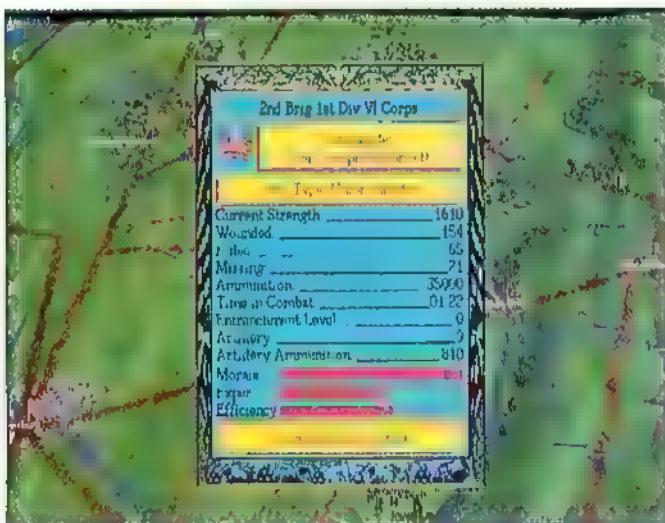
Even heavily fortified units act as if they have no mass whatsoever, rendering a strong defensive line nearly useless. On making contact with the line, enemy units need only to briefly endure casualties and then pass through it. The entire concept

makes a mockery of the deadly trench warfare that dominated World War I. In some cases, during melee, units being attacked from the flank or rear inflict more casualties than they receive. While playing Pharsalus, I encountered a situation in which I repeatedly attacked two enemy units from the front, flank and rear without inflicting a single casualty. Is it a bug or a feature? Who can tell with this game?

Using the game's default settings results in battles with horrendous casualty rates. At Antietam, I destroyed nearly 80 percent of Lee's army. Units will not rout until they've suffered more than 50 percent casualties. After that, they will quickly reform and return to battle, only to be totally destroyed. Fortunately, you can adjust the settings for musketry, artillery, melee and morale. But this begs the question: Why couldn't the designers set these factors at more realistic levels instead of forcing the player to do it?

As for the artificial intelligence (AI), it is definitely not the world's best, despite the quote on the game box which says it's "recognized as 'the world's best'." The only good thing is that *WAR COLLEGE* is also modern and network playable, so you don't need to suffer through the bad AI.

No amount of hype, gross exaggeration or inflated claims can disguise the fact that *WAR COLLEGE* is a poorly designed product that lacks entertainment value and fails miserably as a historical simulation. In the tradition of UMS II, *WAR COLLEGE* is yet another game that will long be remembered by those who buy it as a purchase they wish they had never made. ☐



► SCORECARDS With a click of the mouse, players can learn the status of their units. The game's interface is fairly intuitive and giving orders is relatively easy.

elevations appear. The next thing you notice is that nearly every unit in your army is deployed in column with its flanks facing the enemy, causing you to blurt out your first expletive. Fortunately, although *WAR COLLEGE* is a real-time game, it starts paused, enabling you to issue orders and get the situation sorted out before combat begins. The game runs in one-minute pulses, but you can pause the action at any time to issue new orders to your troops.

APPEAL: Those who have an interest in the four battles portrayed or who are fans of *UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR II* might find *WAR COLLEGE* enjoyable.

PROS: *WAR COLLEGE* provides encyclopedic treatment of the battles it includes, has good terrain maps, a fairly intuitive interface and modern/network play.

CONS: The game self-destructs with its ludicrous combat model, warping units, lack of sound effects and total lack of replay value.





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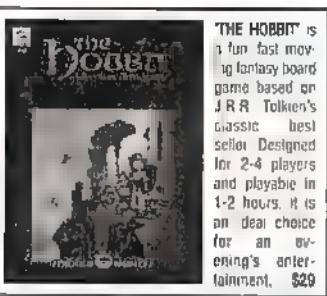
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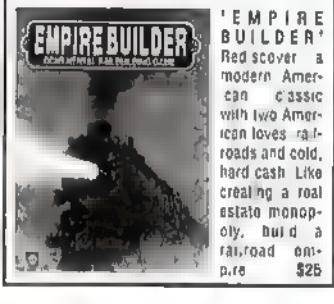
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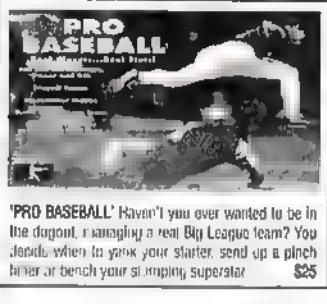
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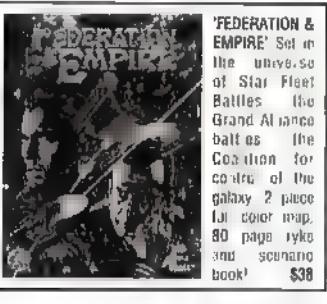
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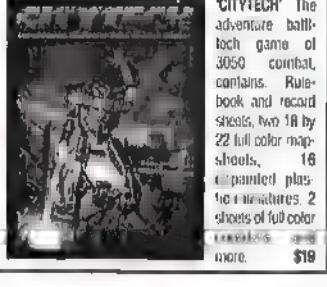
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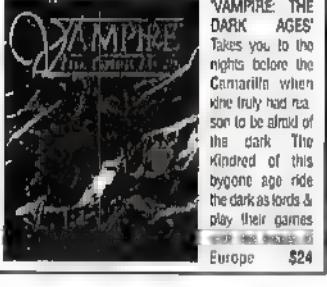
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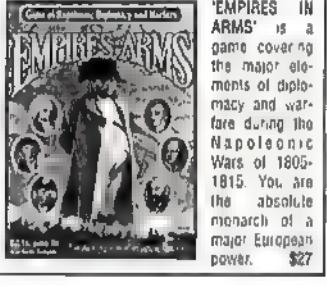
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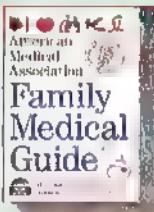
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176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200
201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225
226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250
251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275
276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300
301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325
326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350
351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375
376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400

1 What is the highest level of education that you completed? (Check one only)

- Some high school or less
- Graduate High School
- Some College or Technical school
- Graduated College
- Post Graduate school

2 Computer currently owned is

(Check all that apply)

- IBM compatible (Intel standard)
- Macintosh
- Amiga
- Dedicated game machine
- None

3 If Intel, what level?

(Check one only)

- Power PC
- Pentium® 586
- 486
- 386
- 286

4 Do you own (or plan to buy in next 6 months) a CD-ROM? (Check one only)

- Own
- Plan to buy (6 months)

5 How often do you usually buy computer games?

(Check one only)

- Once a week
- Once every two to three weeks
- Once a month
- Once every two to three months
- Once every four to six months
- Once a year

6 Where are you most likely to purchase games?

(Check all that apply)

- Independent computer store
- Computer store chain
- Consumer electronic store
- Direct from vendor
- Mass merchandising store
- Mail order

7 What is your (and others in household) favorite type of game? (Check one in each column)

Year	Other	0 or ?
Strategy		
War/Military		
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Brain Teasers		
Card		
Sport		
Action/Arcade		
Educational		
Adventure		

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PAGE	COMPANY	PRODUCT	R.S. #	PAGE	COMPANY	PRODUCT	R.S. #
48-49	20th Century Fox Home Entertainment	Die Hard	768	3	Logitech	WingMan Warrior	*
45-46	2D Level, Inc.	Monty Python & the Quest for the Holy Grail	*	103	LoudCloud Technologies	Ferngully	86
166	Acres Software, Inc.	Links LS	246	55-57	DreamWorks Entertainment Company	Asteria	18
67	Acres Software, Inc.	Pandora Directive	246	107	Matrix Graphics, Inc.	Matrix Mystique	249
156-157	Acclaim	Iron Man	65	9	Miray	Sim City 2000 Network Edition	255
172	Acclaim	Star Soccer	6	40	Mint Studio	CyberJudas	225
23	Acclaim	Deadlock	292	45	Mionix	Righteous 3D	294
65-67	Acclaim	Endentor	291	215	Microprose	Mage: The Gathering	254
176-177	Acclaim	Legends '97 Football	40	41-6	Microsoft	Left Behind	*
199	Acclaim	Star Control 3	44	60	MindScape	Chess Master 5000	134
23	AGI Laboratory Ltd.	Power Ramp	191	7	MindScape	MegaRace 7	131
93	Activation	Hyperblade	39	236	Mission Control Software	Mail Order Products	99
10-11	Activation	Interstate '96	98	6	Mpath Interactive	MP4Player	199
43-45	Activision	MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	41	106	MIX & MATCH	Multi-Player Games Network	135
40-41	Aetherion	Time Commandos	58	15-17	New World Computing	Everquest	136
125	Activision	Zork Nexus	36	29	New World Computing	House of Might & Magic	138
105	Aftee Lansing	ACSS5 Multimedia Speaker System	52	98	New World Computing	Wages of War	137
66	American Softworks	S.I.O.R.M.	92	24-25	Novalogic	Combat Simulation Games	221
101	Berkeley Systems	You Don't Know Jack V2	51	155	Orbitron Systems, Inc.	Crowdster	46
183	Retroseda Boltworks	Daggerfall	5	55	PCUZone	Mail Order Products	40
54-55	Buzzword Entertainment	WarCraft II	265	68-69	Philips Electronics	Paradise	297
54	Blue Byte	Albion	114	63-65	Philips Media	Hard Core Games	145
62	Blue Byte	The Settlers II	234	179	Philips Media	Total Control Football	264
5	Bungie Software	Marathon 2	75	27-30	Philips Media	Down in the Dumps	150
10	CHI Products	Game Controllers	60	63	Playmates Interactive	PowerSlave	287
223	Chips & Bits	Board Games & Role Playing Games	61	7	Pulse Entertainment	Bad Mojo	48
22	Chips & Bits	Budget Software	65	220	R&G Game	Used Game Software	17
23	Chips & Bits	Mail Order Adult Software	195	31	Stern On-Line	Retribution In Atlanta	153
209	Chips & Bits	Waterloo	47	26	Stern On-Line	Gabriel Knight II	340
170-171	Chips & Bits	www.admire.com/chips.html	68	27	Stern On-Line	Lighthouse	155
59	Computer Express	Loony Labyrinth	76	115	Stern On-Line	Mysteron/Force CyberStorm	161
72-73	Computer Express	Mac Circle Products	74	53	Stern On-Line	Phantomomancer 2	159
13	Creative Labs, Inc.	AWF-32 Plug & Play	78	89	Stern On-Line	Rama	151
75	Eiger Labs	Head On 28.8 DSSM Modem	203	9	Sir-Tech	Jagged Alliance Deadly Games	162
17	Epic MegaGames, Inc.	Epic MegaGames, Inc.	*	36-3	Sir-Tech	Nemesis A Wizardry Adventure	165
222	Falcon Northwest	calculus MACH V	2	125	Sir-Tech	Shadows Over Riva	164
62-63	FontGenie Inc.	Duke Nukem 3D	7	191	Spectrum Holobyte	Crime Patrol	156
219	FontGenie, Inc.	Shadow Warrior	43	196	Strategic Simulations, Inc.	Age of Rifles	207
153	FormGen, Inc.	Xenophage	217	18-19	The 3DO Company	PC CD-ROM Games	41
220	Gather's Gold	Mail Order Products	65	155	ThunderSoft Technologies	ThunderSoft	121
201-204	Gateway 2000	Destination	295	60	VS&I Inc.	AD&D - CD ROM	214
223	GoldTree Enterprises	Cloudinx	*	23	United CD-ROM	Mail Order Products	194
47	Gratier	Banana Bugs	*	21	Viacom New Media	DeathDrome	178
165	Gratier	Battle of the Ironclads	*	207	Viacom New Media	The Divide: Enemies Within	179
67	Gratier	Greg Norman Golf	*	127	Viacom New Media	Enigma Nations	139
159	GT Interactive Software	Amok	202	157	Vivendi New Media	SlushScape	76
158	GT Interactive Software	NINch	213	160-161	Vivendi Interactive Entertainment	Command & Conquer: Red Alert	65
181	GTI Entertainment	NCAA Basketball	211	15, 17	Virgin Interactive Entertainment	ToonTruck	239
21	GTI Entertainment	Timecycle	15	77	Virgin Interactive Entertainment	7	181
20	GTI Entertainment	Titanic	240	12	Virtual 3D	iGlasses!	245
102	Hawes Microcomputer Products	Accura 288 DSSM Modem	224	129	Warner Books	GLB	286
143	INSCAPP	DPVO Adventures of the Smart Patrol	212	139	Watris Entertainment	Cyberia 2	299
175	Interactive Magic	Bruce Jenner's Decathlon	105	132	Yankee Corp. of America	YST Multimedia Speakers	82
189	Interactive Magic	Hind	105	195	ZDNet	ZDNet	290
215	Interactive Magic	Alpha Alertware	109	276	ZDNet	ZDIV	289
69	Interplay Productions	Normality	59	14	Zephyr Computer	The Speed Demon	258
2	Iomega	zip drive	*				

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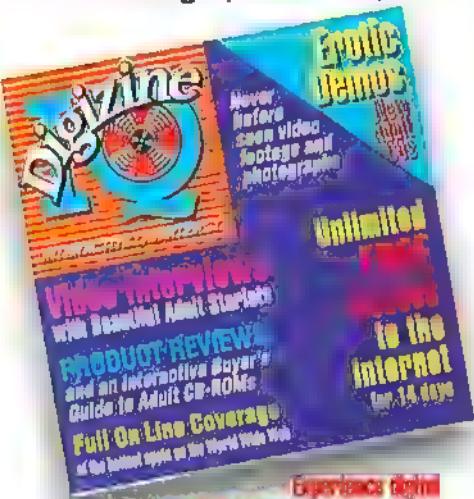
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the records, established the benchmarks, and held gamers in delighted trances for hours untold.

HIGHLIGHTS

BATTLE CHESS

Interplay, 1988

While supporters of Go may argue that it is really the oldest game, there's little question that Chess is the most widely-played game in the world. Early attempts to bring Chess to the computer focused heavily on artificial intelligence, with the result that many of today's computer opponents (when set to their highest levels) can best even above-average humans 99 percent of the time. **BATTLE CHESS**, however, was a new breed of Bishop that focused more on entertainment than pure skill. No longer were captured pieces simply removed from the board. Knights strode arrogantly into the contested square and slashed at ducking Pawns, who replied with low blows. Bishop's staves turned into halberds, and sneaky Kings concealed automatic pistols underneath their robes. Both the Amiga version and the later IBM CD version offered excellent sound effects: the clank of armor, the swoosh of blades, the crashing of Rock "Rock" Gongs as they castled their Kings to safety; all contributing to a sense of fun still different from any Chess game before or since. And while the computer opponent will never replace that of, say, **CHESSMASTER**, the AI had its moments. Later versions added more varied opening books, the ability to transition from one opening to another, and much-improved algorithms, particularly in **BATTLE CHESS 4000**. Somehow, though, games of Battle Chess always seemed to end up as wide-open affairs, with tons of exchanges to see the clever animation sequences. Still widely available at discount prices, **BATTLE CHESS** makes a fine introduction to computer games.



BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR

Dynamix, 1993

There's little question that the fantasy role-playing genre has fallen on hard times, with no new series emerging to seriously challenge the **ULTIMA**, **MIGHT & MAGIC** and **WIZARDRY** triumvirate—and even those franchises look a bit long in the dragon's tooth. One of the few games to buck this trend was Dynamix' **BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR**. The design team worked so closely with author Raymond Feist that **KRONDOR** is almost another "novel" in Feist's award-winning Midkemia fantasy chronicles. To be sure, there are some irritations, such as the huge number of side-quests, some of which add little to the story. But in an era where games were bursting onto CD-ROM, only to have 20 hours (or less) of tepid gameplay amidst multimedia, **KRONDOR** stands out because of its depth. The game's characters—fleshed out by Feist—exhibit loyalty, treachery, bravery, even a wry sense of humor. The plot contains numerous twists with plenty of intrigue and an authentic fantasy feel that most RPGs strive for in vain. There is a sense of richness, of epic conflict in an enormous game world where you could wander for hours, simply ignoring the plot and investigating the countryside. Not for the faint of heart, **KRONDOR** rewards those who immerse themselves in another world. Unfortunately, Sierra orphaned the **KRONDOR** property because it couldn't sell enough copies fast enough to meet a quota. How ironic, then, that not only is 7th Level producing **RETURN TO KRONDOR**, but that Sierra has decided to return with an unofficial sequel, **BETRAYAL AT ANTARA**.



Modern Inductees

Inductees Prior To 1989

BATTLE CHESS (Interplay Productions, 1988)
CHESSMASTER (The Software Toolworks, 1986)
DUNGEON MASTER (FTL Software, 1987)
EARL WEAVER BASEBALL (Electronic Arts, 1986)
EMPIRE (Interstel, 1978)
F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER (MicroProse, 1988)
GETTYSBURG: THE TURNING POINT (SSI, 1986)
KAMPFGRUPPE (Strategic Simulations, 1985)
MECH BRIGADE (Strategic Simulations, 1985)
MIGHT & MAGIC (New World Computing, 1986)
M.U.L.E. (Electronic Arts, 1983)
PIRATES (MicroProse, 1987)
SIMCITY (Maxis, 1987)
STARFLIGHT (Electronic Arts, 1986)
THE BARD'S TALE (Electronic Arts, 1985)
ULTIMA III (Origin Systems, 1983)
ULTIMA IV (Origin Systems, 1985)
WAR IN RUSSIA (Strategic Simulations, 1984)
WASTELAND (Interplay Productions, 1986)
WIZARDRY (Si-Tech Software, 1981)
ZORK (Infocom, 1981)

ALONE IN THE DARK
(I-Motion, 1992)

BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR
(Dynamix, 1993)

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
(LucasArts, 1993)

DOOM
(id Software, 1993)

FALCON 3.0
(Spectrum Holobyte, 1991)

FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO
(Dynamix, 1993)

GUNSHIP
(MicroProse, 1989)

HARPOON
(Three-Sixty Pacific, 1989)

KING'S QUEST V
(Sierra On-Line, 1990)

LEMMINGS
(Psygnosis, 1991)

LINKS 386 PRO
(Access Software, 1992)

M-1 TANK PLATOON
(MicroProse, 1989)

MASTER OF ORION
(MicroProse, 1993)

RAILROAD TYCOON
(MicroProse, 1990)

RED BARON
(Dynamix, 1990)

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION
(MicroProse, 1991)

THEIR FINEST HOUR
(LucasArts, 1989)

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
(LucasArts, 1990)

TIE FIGHTER
(LucasArts, 1994)

ULTIMA VI
(Origin Systems, 1990)

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD
(Origin Systems, 1992)

WING COMMANDER I & II
(Origin Systems, 1990-91)

WOLFENSTEIN 3-D
(id Software, 1992)

X-COM
(MicroProse, 1994)

Computer game programs have grown so massive and the number of hardware configurations has become so huge that incompatibilities and glitches are frustratingly common.

Battleground 3: Waterloo

V1.01 Update: Latest upgrade to BATTLEGROUNDS 3: WATERLOO. Please view or download the text file, BGW101.TXT.

Indy's Desktop Adventures

Installation Patch: Corrects installation problems. If you had no trouble installing the game, don't use this patch. Replace the old installer by copying this file onto the Desktop Adventures floppy disk. When queried, choose to overwrite the existing SETUP.EXE.

Flight Simulator 5.0A

Update: Includes several hardware and AI improvements including improved flight equations (including stall and spin models), Sound Blaster/SB Pro/SB16 improvements, improved joystick response, and 320x200 256 color VGA mode for faster performance. Fixes the "Error 0039" problem with Pentiums in VGA mode.

Grand Prix Championship Manager 2 Update: Latest patch fixes reported errors.

Lion 560K Conventional Memory Patch: This file will allow LION to run with 560k conventional memory. Extract it and place the file in the LION directory.

Monopoly CD ROM V1.3

Update: This self-extracting file fixes lockup problems caused by some of the videos and includes the newest version of the FAQ file. Refer to the README for installation instructions.

Panthers in the Shadows

V1.17 Patch: This update adds eight-way facing and infantry secondary weapons firing, and fixes

several bugs like the "red star" logo, victory computation and deep water bridge bugs.

Silent Hunter V1.01 Interim

Update: This self-extracting zip file fixes "Phantom Ship" contact generation bug in open seas and compressed air usage bug. Additions and changes include change in crew quality update; addition of No Depth Charges below 200 in historic models; and lowers merchant crew gunnery effectiveness. Put new executable SH.EXE in SILENT HUNTER directory replacing old file. See README.101 file for details.

Silent Steel MPEG Video

Upgrade: Supports many other MPEG cards and MPEG software drivers, including Ace MPEG cards. Copy STEEL.EXE into the C:\MSTEEL directory. From the MSTEEL directory, delete any saved games. Type: del *.ssg.

Stalingrad V2.0 Patch: Fixes the EPT0036 error message and supersedes the earlier file that would not update V1.85 correctly.

Stonekeep V1.2: Fixes various problems. To use this patch you must have PKUNZIPEXE Version 2.04g. Unzip the SK_P12.ZIP file in the directory where STONEKEEP is installed. The default directory is C:\INTRPLAY\STONKEEP.

TacOps Update for Windows

V1.03: Update contains 11 new user-requested enhancements, more U.S., Canadian, and OPFOR units, and a number of bug fixes. Consisting of an update installation program, several data files, and a text file, this update can be unzipped with either WinZip or

Software fixes, or "patches," for buggy programs have become a necessary evil until we reach the golden age of standardized platforms and bug-free programs.

PKUNZIP 2.04g: To use the update you must have the retail version of TacOps for Windows v1.00, v1.01, or v1.02.

Tigers On The Prowl II V2.01

Update: Fixes the floating point error, occasional replay problems, IPV/IPP strings, and adds about 20 more weapons. This update only works for ToPII. To use this self-extracting file, copy it into your ToP2 directory and type "TOP-201" and it will overwrite the old ToP2 files.

Total Mayhem V1.02 Update:

This zipped file contains 10 executable files that fix various problems. Refer to the Patch.txt file for instructions.



► New Patches are on Disk.

ZDNet

These patches can usually be downloaded from the major online networks (America Online, CompuServe, ZDNet) and Computer Gaming World's Web site (<http://www.zdnet.com/gaming>) but can also be obtained from individual software publisher's Web sites or direct from the publisher with proof of purchase.

Publisher Web Sites

Many of these patches are available directly from the publishers, at the following sites:

Accolade: <http://www.accolade.com>

Activision: <http://www.activision.com>

Apogee/3d Realms: <http://www.apogee1.com>

Bethesda: <http://www.bethsoft.com>

Blizzard: <http://www.blizzard.com/tech.html>

Bullfrog: <http://www.ea.com/bullfrog.html>

Domark: <http://www.domark.com>

EA: <http://www.ea.com>

Id Software: <http://www.idsoftware.com>

Interactive Magic: <http://www.magicgames.com/games.html>

Interplay: <http://www.interplay.com>

Looking Glass: <http://www.vie.com/lgt/utility.html>

LucasArts: <http://www.lucasarts.com>

MicroProse: <http://www.microprose.com/mpfiles.html>

Microsoft: <http://www.microsoft.com>

Mindscape: <http://www.mindscape.com>

New World Computing: <http://www.nwcomputing.com>

Ocean: <http://www.el2000.com>

Origin: <http://www.ea.com/origin.english/index.html>

Papyrus: <http://www.sierra.com>

Philips: <http://spider.medaphilips.com/media/games>

Sierra On-Line: <http://www.sierra.com>

Spectrum HoleByte: <http://www.trek.microprose.com/shfiles.html>

SSI: <http://www.ss.onine.com>

Take 2: <http://westlol.com/~taketwo/ripper.html#patches>

Virgin: <http://www.vie.com/html/vies.upport.html>

THE COMPUTER GAMING POLL • A MONTHLY SURVEY OF CGW SUBSCRIBERS

Each month more than 1,500 "lucky" CGW subscribers are selected at random to rate 100 computer games. The results of that poll are calculated into the aggregate results of previous months to yield a cumulative average for the best plays in gaming. This month's listing is the first under a new system so rankings are likely to be more dynamic than in recent months, and some Top 10 categories don't include a full 10 games. As more responses accrue, the rankings will stabilize and all the slots will fill in. In the meantime, we hope you find the new ratings race as fascinating as we do.

TOP ACTION GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	8.49
2 Rayman	Ubisoft	8.14
3 Doom II	Id	8.06
4 The Need For Speed	EA	8.04
5 Dark Forces	LucasArts	7.93
6 Hyper 3D Pinball	Virgin	7.82
7 Descent II	Interplay	7.80
8 Hexen	Raven/Id	7.77
9 Virtual Pool	Interplay	7.63
10 System Shock	EA/Origin	7.50

TOP ADVENTURE GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	8.43
2 Mission Critical	Legend	7.93
3 Zork Nemesis	Activision	7.91
4 Full Throttle	LucasArts	7.49
5 Phantasmagoria	Sierra	7.47
6 Ripper	Take 2	7.42
7 The Dark Eye	Inscapa	7.20
8 Bad Mojo	Acclaim	7.19
9 The Dig	LucasArts	7.12
10 Under A Killing Moon	Access	7.12

TOP CLASSIC/PUZZLE GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 You Don't Know Jack	Berkley	8.02
2 Incredible Toons	Sierra	7.56
3 Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	7.10
4 Monopoly	Virgin/Westwood	6.75
5 Trityst	Virgin	6.62
6 Connections	Discovery Channel	6.00
7 Lemmings 3D	Psygnosis	5.94
8 Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess	Davidson	5.50
9 —	—	—
10 —	—	—

TOP SIMULATION/SPACE COMBAT GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	8.67
2 MechWarrior 2	Activision	8.40
3 Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	8.39
4 Silent Hunter	Mindscape/SS	8.03
5 EF2000	Ocean	8.03
6 Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	7.83
7 NASCAR Racing	Papyrus	7.81
8 U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	7.80
9 Wings Of Glory	Origin	7.64
10 1942 Pacific Air War Gold	MicroProse	7.61

TOP SPORTS GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 NHL Hockey	EA	8.31
2 NBA Live '95	EA	7.68
3 PGA Tour Golf 96	EA	7.58
4 FPS Football Pro 96	Sierra	7.55
5 FPS Football 95	Sierra	7.50
6 Hardball 5	Accolade	7.10
7 Hardball IV	Accolade	6.54
8 FPS Baseball	Sierra	6.52
9 Grand Prix Manager	Spectrum HoloByte	5.90
10 —	—	—

TOP STRATEGY GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Warcraft II	Blizzard	9.04
2 Civilization II	MicroProse	8.81
3 C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	8.67
4 Command & Conquer	Virgin/Westwood	8.57
5 Master Of Magic	MicroProse	8.06
6 Warhammer	Mindscape	7.96
7 Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	7.83
8 Warcraft	Blizzard Entertainment	7.79
9 Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	7.78
10 Warlords II Deluxe	SSG	7.68

TOP ROLE PLAYING GAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Might & Magic: Clouds Of Xeen	New World Computing	7.64
2 Anvil Of Dawn	New World Computing	7.60
3 Stonekeep	Interplay	7.40
4 Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	Mindscape/SSI	6.97
5 Wolf	Sanctuary Woods	6.93
6 Lion	Sanctuary Woods	5.25
7 —	—	—
8 —	—	—
9 —	—	—
10 —	—	—

TOP WARGAMES

NAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Steel Panthers	Mindscape/SSI	8.60
2 Panzer General	Mindscape/SSI	8.43
3 Battlefront: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	7.42
4 Custer's Last Command	Incredible Simulations	7.29
5 Allied General	Mindscape/SSI	7.20
6 Perfect General II	QQP	6.89
7 Stalingrad	Avalon Hill	6.50
8 Harpoon II	IntraCorp	6.45
9 Rise Of The West	RAW	4.00
10 —	—	—

Reader Poll #144

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
★ 1	Warcraft II	Blizzard	ST	9.04
2	Civilization II	MicroProse	ST	8.81
3	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.67
★ 4	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	SI	8.67
★ 5	Steel Panthers	Mindscape/SSI	WG	8.60
6	Command & Conquer	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.57
★ 7	Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	AC	8.49
8	Panzer General	Mindscape/SSI	WG	8.43
★ 9	Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	AD	8.43
10	MechWarrior 2	Activision	SI	8.40
11	Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	SI	8.39
★ 12	NHL Hockey	EA	SP	8.31
13	Rayman	Ubisoft	AC	8.14
14	Doom II	Id	AC	8.06
	Master Of Magic	MicroProse	ST	8.06
16	The Need For Speed	EA	AC	8.04
17	Silent Hunter	Mindscape/SSI	SI	8.03
	EF2000	Ocean	SI	8.03
★ 19	You Don't Know Jack	Bonkay Systems	CP	8.02
20	Warhammer	Mindscape	ST	7.96
21	Dark Forces	LucasArts	AC	7.93
	Mission Critical	Legend	AD	7.93
23	Zork Nemesis	Activision	AD	7.91
24	Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	ST	7.83
	Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	SI	7.83
26	Hyper 3D Pinball	Virgin	AC	7.82
27	NASCAR Racing	Papyrus	SI	7.81
28	U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	SI	7.80
	Descent II	Interplay	AC	7.80
30	Warcraft	Blizzard	ST	7.79
31	Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	ST	7.78
32	Hexen	Raven/Id	AC	7.77
33	NBA Live '95	EA	SP	7.68
	Warlords II Deluxe	SSG	ST	7.68
	X-Com: Terror From The Deep	MicroProse	ST	7.68
★ 36	Might & Magic: Clouds Of Keen	New World Computing	RP	7.64
	Wings Of Glory	Origin	SI	7.64
38	Virtual Pool	Interplay	AC	7.63
39	1942 Pacific Air War Gold	MicroProse	SI	7.61
40	Anvil Of Dawn	MicroProse	RP	7.60
41	PGA Tour Golf 98	EA	SP	7.58
42	Incredible Toons	Sierra	CP	7.56
43	FPS Football Pro 96	Sierra	SP	7.55
44	FPS Football 95	Sierra	SP	7.50
	System Shock	EA/Origin	AC	7.50
46	Full Throttle	LucasArts	AD	7.49
47	Fantasy General	Mindscape/SSI	ST	7.48
48	Phantasmagoria	Sierra	AD	7.47
49	CivNet	MicroProse	ST	7.46
50	Terra Nova: Strike Force Centaur	Virgin	AC	7.44

	NAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
51	Ripper	Take 2	AD	7.42
	Battleground: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	WG	7.42
53	Flight Commander 2 Mission Bldr	Avalon Hill	WG	7.40
	Stonekeep	Interplay	RP	7.40
55	Sim City CDROM	Maxis	ST	7.37
56	Heretic	Raven/Id	AC	7.30
57	Custer's Last Command	Incredible Simulations	WG	7.29
58	U.S. Navy Fighters	EA	SI	7.25
59	Super Street Fighter II	Capcom	AC	7.23
60	Magic Carpet 2	EA/Bulldog	AC	7.22
61	The Dark Eye	Inscape	AD	7.20
	Allied General	Mindscape/SSI	WG	7.20
63	Bad Mojo	Acclaim	AD	7.19
64	Flight Unlimited	Looking Glass	SI	7.17
65	Aces Of The Deep	Sierra/Dynamix	SI	7.14
66	Caesar II	Sierra	ST	7.12
	The Dig	LucasArts	AD	7.12
	Under A Killing Moon	Access	AD	7.12
69	Riddle Of Master Lu	Sanctuary Woods	AD	7.11
70	Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	CP	7.10
	Hardball 5	Accolade	SP	7.10
72	Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	AC	7.06
	Top Gun	Spectrum Holobyte	SI	7.06
74	Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	Mindscape/SSI	RP	6.97
75	Star Trek: TNG, Final Unity	Spectrum Holobyte	AD	6.96
76	Legends Of Kyrandia 3	Virgin/Westwood	AD	6.95
77	Screamer	Virgin	AC	6.94
78	Wolf	Sanctuary Woods	RP	6.93
79	Perfect General II	QOP	WG	6.89
80	King's Quest VII	Sierra	AD	6.88
	Apache	Interactive Magic	SI	6.88
82	Descent	Interplay	AC	6.87
83	Magic Carpet	EA/Bulldog	AC	6.79
84	Werewolf vs. Comanche	NovaLogic	SI	6.78
85	Chronomaster	Intracorp/Capstone	AD	6.75
	Monopoly	Virgin/Westwood	CP	6.75
87	EarthSleige 2	Sierra	SI	6.73
88	Future Shock	Bethesda	AC	6.72
89	Fast Attack	Sierra	SI	6.71
	1830	Avalon Hill	ST	6.71
	Relentless	EA	AD	6.71
92	Mortal Kombat 3	GT Interactive	AC	6.70
93	Earthworm Jim	Activision	AC	6.68
94	FX Fighter	GTE Entertainment	AC	6.68
95	Triburst	Virgin	CP	6.62
96	Loderunner	Sierra	AC	6.61
97	Fighter Duel	Phillips Media	SI	6.57
98	Su-27 Flanker	Mindscape/SSI	SI	6.58
99	Buried In Time	Sanctuary Woods	AD	6.55
100	Hardball IV	Accolade	SP	6.54

Games on unnumbered lines have scores equal to the line above. ★ = Top game of type. Ret = New Game. AD = Adventure, RP = Role Playing, SI = Simulation/ Space Combat, ST = Strategy, WG = Wargame, AC = Action, SP = Sports, CP = Classic/Puzzle. Games are retired after two years and become eligible for the Hall of Fame.

What's The Deal With... Gimmicks?

I guess it's fair out from those local news bites on the E3 show a few months ago—you know, the one with some guy in a bad suit going to the booth that has the most scantily clad women, believing everything he's told—but I find myself growing tired of these people endlessly crowing about "things to come," when they should be making sure that today's games are worth playing. Despite the fact that only ravens like shiny new stuff more than I do, I find that all the excitement over gimmicks and techno doo-dads at these shows really tends to overshadow the truth, that there is nothing very entertaining about another bloody Super-Mario game.

I guess I should thank Nintendo for making a big deal out of skewed 3-D graphics ("Now you can make Mario travel anywhere in the virtual world, exploring as you want!") Golly, you mean the way you've been able to do in real computer games for about the last BILLION years?). At least they drowned out the agonizing babble over Virtual Reality, and how it's going to change civilization forever by next weekend. Of course, just when I thought the VR hype-fest was over, I spotted yet another book on its implications. Given the actual state of the technology, and the fact that the average person can't be bothered to read

a book, never mind pick their own movie endings, all this fretting is almost as premature as running home after the first performance of *Macbeth* and penning an essay on what its effects on TV might someday be.

What I'd really like to see is this: all the money currently going into bad VR headgear being saved until somebody invents cheap, fast color flatscreens. Instead, they could put more effort into technologies that might actually benefit gamers, like really efficient voice-recognition software. Let's face it, voice commands are probably the only way the average Joe is going to be able to handle the next generation of sims. The Command cul of Aces of the DEEP certainly proved that voice command is as important to realism as the multi-function joystick was to FALCON. The larger the vehicle being simulated, the more vital voice-recognition becomes. The cool but unwieldy RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2 would have been infinitely more enjoyable if you could have called for shields or warp speed.

The transition from Gimmick to Feature is an important one to computer gaming, and it's important to recognize that even something as widely used as live-action video is still really in mid-transition. While multimedia abounds in the gaming world, it still functions as pure chrome in most of the games, and only rarely does it become an intrinsic part of the game. For instance, GABRIEL KNIGHT 2 is an

incredible game—but if you really look at it, most of what makes it special is buried deep in the writing and plotting. The live-action gives it a greater sense of realism, but quality graphics could have done the job almost as well.

We are just entering the realm

► “ Multimedia abounds in computer gaming, but until it becomes an intrinsic part of the game, it's still just a gimmick. ”

where multimedia is relevant enough to shape the flow of a game, as it does in the last two WING COMMANDERS. Even more rarely, multimedia can serve an important function in the game itself. The only game I have seen recently

that achieves the latter is PSYCHIC DETECTIVE, a nifty little title that makes an initial impression of pure Gimmick, but delivers up gameplay intrinsically tied to live-action video. Personally, I'd love to see that design team getting a little more money and time; they could develop a real breakthrough title.

The fact is, the entertainment media will never pay attention to skill, and will never stop searching endlessly for the next HOT tech—expecting them to spot relevant trends in this industry is as foolish as setting aside money for your own VR pit. It would be nice, but only if marketers weren't so caught up in the hype that they dedicate whole sections of a store to gaudy displays with vaguely three-dimensional Marios in washed-out, "night-sniper-scope" green. (Not that the thought of looking at Mario through a sniper scope doesn't have its own dark appeal.)

After the smoke and delusion of E3 fades, I'm sure there will be a few more execs out there (who have never played a computer game in their lives) dreaming that some badly executed gimmick will double their sales. Maybe, if we are very lucky, something useful might evolve from it. At least we can hope. ☺



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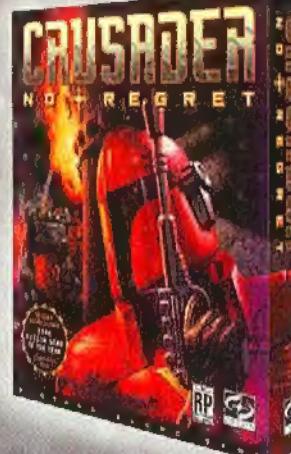
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